A GARDEN OF POMEGRANATES

Skrying on the Tree of Life

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A textbook for practical work with the Qabalah.



CHAPTER NINE

QABALISTIC RITUALS AND EXERCISES

The 22 Paths, added to the 10 Sephiroth form the famous "Thirty-two Ways" by which Wisdom descends by successive stages upon Man, and may enable him to mount to the Source of Wisdom by passing successively upward through these 32 paths. This process of mental Abstraction was the Rabbinic form of what the Hindoo knows as Yoga, or the Union of the human with the Divine, by contemplation and absorption of the mind in a mystical reverie. —W. W. Westcott, An Introduction to the Study of the Kabbalah[1]

Study of the Qabalah is a fulfilling endeavor by itself, but study is only half of the equation. Unless the principies of the Qabalah are put into practice in one's life through meditations, visualizations, affirmations, and ritual exercises, they will not become the all-encompassing system of spiritual growth that they are intended to be. The Qabalah is described as the "yoga of the West" because it is designed to be an interactive process of personal evolution. Those individuals who read about the Qabalah but never commit to performing any practical work with it risk becoming "armchair magicians"—people who can rattle off names and dates, facts and figures, but have no idea how to perform the proper techniques of magic—thus they have no real understanding of the methods or even the purpose of *theurgy* ("god-working"). As with most human enterprises, practice makes perfect.

Too many people fall into the trap of assuming that there is nothing more to the art of magic than the possession of some "supreme secret." The search for hidden knowledge, merely for its own sake, has led many "adept-wannabes" down the path of illusion and egotism. The plain, simple truth of the matter is that the most significant magical secrets are not particularly secret. Many people over the centuries have written about them openly. The secrets of magic are "hiding in plain sight." But they can only be understood through *experience.*

Magic is primarily a technique for sharpening the magician's latent psychic senses. Quite simply, it is a method for learning how to increase and focus one's faculties of willpower, imagination, memory, and intuition. The more one is able to train these faculties, the greater the chance of being in alignment with the divine forces that govern the universe. It has often been said that the principie of magic is based on four fundamental truths: 1) that the physical universe is only a part, and by no means the most important part, of total reality; 2) that human *willpower is* a real force, capable of being trained, and that the disciplined human will is capable of changing its environment and producing physical effects; 3) that this *willpower* must be directed by the *imagination; 4)* that the universe is not a mixture of chance factors and events, but an ordered system of *corres pondences* (including Qabalistic correspondences); and that the understanding of the pattern of these correspondences enables the magician to use them to effect change.

The Qabalah has been called the "Ladder of Lights" because it not only depicts cosmic generation, which is the descent of the divine into the physical, but also defines how the individual may employ it for spiritual ascent back to the divine through ceremony, contemplation, and prayer. Magicians employ various techniques to climb the many levels of consciousness and inner reality. Among these methods are visualization (the ability to create a strong, clear mental image), vibration (the technique of intoning a divine name causing a strong "vibration" in the chest cavity that can be felt throughout the body), and the use of symbols to stimulate the imagination and act as a kind of doorway into the inner planes.

In the pages that follow, we have provided several exercises and guided visualizations which build on Regardie's dissertation in A *Garden of Pomegranates.* Students who make use of there offerings will be well on their way to discovering the real value of the Qabalah and the true secret of magic, "the Highest Science, or Wisdom, based upon knowledge and practical experience."[2]

THE EXERCISE OF THE MIDDLE PILLAR

(This exercise can be performed either standing, sitting, or lying down.) After a few minutes of relaxation, imagine a sphere of white light just aboye your head. Vibrate the name "**Eheieh**" (pronounced "Eh-hey-yay," meaning "I am"). Keep vibrating this word until it is the only thought in your conscious mind. Then imagine a shaft of light descending from your Kether center to your Daath center at the nape of the neck.

Form a sphere of light at the Daath center. Vibrate the name "**YHVH Elohim**" (pronounced "Yode-heh-vav-heh El-oh-heem," meaning "the Lord God"). Intone the name until it is the only thing in your conscious mind.

Bring a shaft of light down from the Daath center to the Tiphareth center around your heart. Form a sphere of light there. Vibrate the name "**YHVH Eloah ve-Daath**" (pronounced "Yodeheh-vav-heh El-oh-ah v'-Dah-ath," meaning "Lord God of Knowledge") several times until it fills your consciousness.

See the shaft of light descending from Tiphareth into the Yesod center in the genital region. Imagine a sphere of light forming there. Intone the name "**Shaddai El Chai**" (pronounced "Shah-dye El-Chai," meaning "Almighty Living God") several times as before.

Visualize the shaft of light descending from Yesod into your Malkuth center at the feet and ankles. Vibrate the name "**Adonai ha-Aretz**" (pronounced "Ah-doe-nye ha-Ah-retz," meaning "Lord of Earth") a number of times as before.

Imagine the Middle Pillar complete. Then circulate the light you have brought down through the Middle Pillar around the outside of

your body to strengthen your aura. Perform each circulation a number of times.

Circulation One: Side to Side

Using the cycles of rhythmic breathing, bring the light down one side of the body and up the other, from Kether to Malkuth and back to Kether. Exhale and visualize the light descending the left side of the body. Inhale and imagine the light ascending the right side of the body back to Kether.

Circulation Two: Front to Back

After performing Circulation One for a short space of time, imagine the ribbon of light descending from Kether down the front of your body to Malkuth and rising up your back, returning again to Kether.

Circulation Three: The Shower of Light

Still employing rhythmic breathing, visualize the sphere of Malkuth, then see the shaft of light rising up the Middle Pillar in the center of your body. When it reaches Kether, imagine a shower of light cascading down the outside of your body as it descends to Malkuth again. Circulate the light in this manner for some time.

Circulation Four: The Ascending Spiral (Optional)

Now see the light rise again in a ribbon that spirals around the outside of your body from Malkuth to Kether.

Closing

Focus some energy back into Tiphareth, the seat of balance. You may decide to end the exercise with the Qabalistic Cross to indicate that you have called down the light of your Kether and balanced it in your aura. Then let your imagination dwell on the aura and see it oval and clear, pulsating with the glow from Tiphareth.

This simple exercise of Middle Pillar is the basis for many complex formulas of magic.

If you are called to see anyone who is depressed, or has a depressing effect on you, you should perform this exercise beforehand. You may also imagine that your aura is hardened at the edge, so that a person is unable to pene trate it and deplete you of vitality.

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A MIDDLE PILLAR EXERCISE ON THE PARTS OF THE SOUL

The basic exercise of the Middle Pillar, which activates the Sephiroth of the central column of balance within the individual's aura, is the foundation for many other formulas of magic, both simple and complex. The exercise provided here is a variation on the Middle Pillar technique specifically designed to awaken all parts of the human soul as described by Regardie in Chapter Five. It is important to not only activate these soul-centers, but to keep a clear channel of communication open between them.

Glose your eyes. After a few minutes of relaxation, imagine yourself growing infinitely tall—your body expands out into space. Your head extends beyond the clouds until at length you are surrounded by the stars, and you stand on the earth, a small orb just beneath your feet.

Visualize a sphere of white light just aboye your head. Vibrate the name "**Yechidah**" (yeh-chee-dah).[3] See the sphere of light aboye your head glow brilliantly as you intone the name. This is your true Divine Self and the root essence of your spirit. It is that which is most pure and most perfect—the part of yourself that is nearest to God or Ain Soph. As you intone the name, visualize a large bright star in the center of your Kether sphere. Keep vibrating the word "Yechidah" until it is the only thought in your mind.

Then imagine a shaft of light descending from your Kether center to your Chokmah center at the left temple of your forehead.

Form a sphere of white light there. Vibrate the name "**Chiah**" (Chee-ah).[4] This is your life-force and your divine will. It is the principie of action within you that puts the will of the divine into motion. It is symbolized by the masculine soul-image of the animus. As you intone the name, visualize a bright, flickering candle flame in the center of your Chokmah sphere. Intone the name "Chiah" until it is your only thought.

Bring a shaft of light horizontally across from your Chokmah center to your Binah center at the right temple of your forehead. Form a sphere of light there. Vibrate the name "**Neshamah**" (Neh-shah-mah). This is your intuitive soul and the source of human perception and spiritual understanding that lets you comprehend the higher will of the divine. It is symbolized by the feminine soul-image of the anima. The Neshamah in Binah helps you to define those parts of yourself that are unique and limited and those parts that are archetypal and limitless. The Neshamah helps you to make sense of your own self-realization. As you intone the name, visualize a silver chalice of pure water in the center of your Binah sphere. Intone the name "Neshamah" several times until it fills your consciousness.

Visualize the Supernal triad of spheres around your head that you Nave just activated. See each of the three radiant orbs connected with three shafts of light. They form a trinity that is the greater Neshamah, formed from the monad, its creative vehicle, and the intuitive self. Taken as a whole, this is your transcendent ego, not the lesser ego, but that which is your Divine Self, higher soul, or higher genius. It is your deepest state of consciousness, that divine spark within you that is immortal and common to all of humankind. It embraces the higher aspects within the collective unconscious of all humanity.

See the shaft of light descending from the Neshamah in Binah (and the Neshamah as a whole). See it pass through the great boundary known as the Abyss and the bridge known as Daath. All the parts of your soul below the Abyss are transitory, mortal, and individual—they belong to you and you alone. See the shaft of white light descending through Daath, from the transcendental to the mortal, from that which is common to all of us, to that which is

singular and personal. See the shaft of light as it passes through the barrier of the Abyss.

Imagine the shaft of light descending to Chesed and then to Geburah at your left and right shoulders respectively. Orbs of light are formed at both centers. Then see the shaft of light continue on to your Tiphareth center at your heart. Visualize a sphere of light formed there that pulsates with brilliance. Vibrate the name "**Ruach**" (Roo-ah'ch). This is your conscious mind and reasoning powers. It is the seat of your lower ego—the portion of yourself that is aware and awake, the part that attempts to organize and interpret your personal experiences. Tiphareth is also the seat of your Higher Self, or Holy Guardian Angel, which mediates between your Divine Self in the Supernals and your lower self in the Nephesh. As you intone the name, visualize an open book filled with information and illustrations in the center of your Tiphareth sphere. Continue to vibrate the name "Ruach." As you do so, the spheres of Chesed and Geburah are activated. In Chesed, your faculty of memory begins to stir. In Geburah, your faculty of will gains in strength. As you continue to vibrate, your Tiphareth center shimmers with light as your faculty of imagination is revitalized. Keep intoning the name of Ruach, and visualize the shaft of light descending from Tiphareth to Netzach and then to Hod, at your left and right hips respectively. Spheres of light are formed at both centers. With these lower Sephiroth you become aware of your lower faculties of emotion and intellect. However, the energies and faculties of all the spheres in the Ruach are centered in Tiphareth where they are interpreted by the lower ego.

See the shaft of light descending from Hod (and from the Ruach as a whole) into the Yesod center in the genital region. Imagine a sphere of light formed there. Intone the name "**Nephesh**" (Neh-fesh). This is your lower self. It contains the primal instincts, fundamental drives, and animal vitality from humanity's prehistoric past. The Nephesh embraces the lowest components of the collective unconscious, those basic aspects that relate to survival, sex, and the reptilian brain. It is also equated with the aura and the etheric body. Because the Nephesh contains the shadow personality and all primal urges and conflicts that have been repressed, the

Nephesh must always remain under the firm control of the Ruach or reasoning mind. The existence of repressed psychic material in the subconsciousness of the Nephesh need not be denied, but rather examined in the light of the Ruach, and always kept in check by the rational mind. As you intone the name, visualize a brightly colored lizard—a chameleon—in the center of your Yesod sphere. Vibrate the name "Nephesh" a number of times.

Visualize the shaft of light descending from Yesod into your Malkuth center at the feet and ankles. Vibrate the name "**G'uph**" (guf). This is a very low level of subconscious psychic activity that is closely tied to your physical body. It is concerned with the total range of psycho-physical functions—it communicates information about the current condition of the body to your brain. As you intone the name, visualize a seashell in the center of your Malkuth sphere. Vibrate the name "G'uph" a number of times.

See all ten Sephiroth that comprise your soul. The orbs formed at each Sephirah within your aura are refulgent with light. See the shafts of light that connect each level of your soul as conduits of *energy* that are open and clear from all obstruction. The various soul-levels are free to communicate information from the Supernal Neshamah down to the G'uph, and from the G'uph to the Neshamah.

Inhale and imagine a ball of light ascending the Tree of Life within you, following the shaft of light that you have built up in your imagination, touching each Sephirah, each soul-center, on its way up.

Exhale and visualize a ball of light descending the Tree within you, following the shaft of light that you have built up in your imagination, touching each Sephirah on its way down.

Do this circulation of breath and its corresponding visualization a number of times.

Now turn your attention back to the G'uph in Malkuth and the low level of the subconscious attached to the physical body. Again visualize the seashell. Then visualize the cells that make up your physical body. See the blood flowing between each cell, bringing nutrients and oxygen to each cell and carrying away waste and toxins. Chemical and electrical impulses cause some cells to split in hall and multiply, creating new cells. Other cells

are old. They die off and are replaced by the newer ones. The electrical impulses behind all cellular activity carries with it a low level of consciousness that is solely concerned with the running of the body mechanism.

Now follow the shaft of light back up to your Nephesh in Yesod. Again visualize the chameleon which changes colors as you contemplate the creature. Be aware of the great power, energy, and vitality that exists in the primal soul of Nephesh. This is also the power that is tapped into by magicians who manipulate their etheric doubles on the astral plane. The Nephesh is that part of your soul that reacts instinctively to visual and other stimuli, and it also sends the sensory experience of symbols to the Ruach aboye.

Now follow the shaft of light back up from your Nephesh to your Ruach, centered in Tiphareth, but connecting with the other Ruach spheres as well. Here, the intellect and the emotions add information about any symbolism experienced by your Nephesh. Again visualize the book—its pages slowly turning as a story unfolds. Words and associated ideas concerning the symbolism are added by the reasoning mirad of the Ruach. Memories about prior experiences with the symbolism may rise to the surface of one's consciousness. The Ruach in Tiphareth is the seat of the great mediator, your Holy Guardian Angel (HGA) or Higher Self who provides a connection for internal communication transmitted between the experience-oriented Nephesh and the numinous Neshamah. The Holy Guardian Angel also helps you make decisions in your life based on higher truths.

Now follow the shaft of light back up to your Supernal triad-your Neshamah, Chiah, and Yechidah. Visualize the chalice of water in Binah, the candle flame in Chokmah, and the star in Kether. Your greater Neshamah, or Divine Self, receives symbols and other images from the Nephesh through the guiding medium of the Ruach. Then your highest self returns a mythic or archetypal symbol or message back down to the Ruach, embellished with internal syrnbolism and words that have meaning to your reasoning mirad. In this way, higher spiritual knowledge is brought down by the Neshamah into the realm of the conscious mirad where it can be comprehended and utilized in your spiritual life. This entire process helps to clear

the channels of communication within your soul and improve the relationships between these portions of your psyche.

Imagine the Tree containing all parts of your soul complete, with clear conduits of energy open between each sphere. Circulate the light you Nave brought down through the center of your body, through the Middle Pillar, and around the body to strengthen your aura. Using the cycles of breathing, visualize bringing the light down one side of the body and up the other, from Kether to Malkuth and back to Kether again. Exhale and visualize the light traveling down the left side. Inhale and see the shaft of light ascending the right side.

After performing this for a short period of time, exhale and imagine the ribbon of light descending from Kether down the front of your body to Malkuth. Inhale and see the light rising up your back to reach Kether.

Still employing rhythmic breathing, exhale and visualize the shaft of light rising up the Middle Pillar in the center of your body. When it reaches Kether, exhale and imagine a shower of light surrounding the outside of your body as it descends to Malkuth again. Circulate the light in this manner for some time.

Then see the light rise again in a ribbon that spirals around the outside of your body (optional).

Finally, focus some of the energy back into your Tiphareth center, the seat of equilibrium and balance.



Literal Qabalah

As Regardie stated in Chapters Six and Seven, the *Literal Qabalah* concerns the relationship between the numbers and letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It exists primarily in three forms: *gematria, notariqon,* and *temurah.* In this chapter, we will give further exampies of Literal Qabalah and explain how the student may employ these techniques to create Qabalistic acronyms and personal mantras for their own magical work.

Gematria

The method of assigning numbers to each of the Hebrew letters is, as Regardie stated earlier, known as *gematria.* The ancient Hebrews did not have a separate set of figures to describe numbers. Instead they used the letters of their alphabet. Gematria developed as a process of ascribing *meaning* to numbers and determining the meanings of words from their numerical value. This is usually accomplished by converting words into their numeral values and comparing them to the values of other words to acquire a new perspective on the original meaning. Words that share the same numerical value are said to have a significant relationship to one another.

For example, the Hebrew word *achad,* which means "one" or "unity," has the numerical value of 13; the same value as the word *ahevah,* "love." Therefore a relationship exists between these Hebrew words. In a final example, 26 is the number given to the Tetragrammaton—YHVH—the most sacred name of the Divine (Yod: 10 + Heh: 5 + Vav: 6 + Heh: 5 = 26). Twenty-six is also the number of the Middle Pillar on the Tree of Life (counting the value of the Sephiroth: 1 + 6 + 9 + 10 = 26).

In the study of gematria, one will find numerous cases of sublime names and concepts sharing numerical values with low and demonic ones. The student is advised to consider this as an example of the Hermetic axiom "As aboye, so below." Even the highest heavens have their equivalents in the lowly abode of shells.

Notariqon

This is a method for finding acronyms. The first form of notariqon is *expansive,* meaning that every letter in a single word is used to create the first initial of another word in a sentence. For example, take the word *berashith,* the first word in Genesis. Every letter of this word can be made into an abbreviation of another word, yielding the sentence "Berashith Rahi Elohim Sheyequebelo Israel Torah," which mean "In the Beginning the God(s) saw that Israel would accept the law."

The second form of notariqon is *contractive—a* complete reversal of the first form. In this case, the first letter of each word in a sentence is taken to create a single word, which is the synthesis of

the entire sentence. One example of this is the word *Ararita* which is constructed from the sentence "Achad Rosh Achdotho Rosh Ichudo Temurahzo Achad,"[5] meaning "One is his beginning, One is his individuality, his permutation is One."

Notariqons may also be formed using letters other than the initial ones, such as the final or middle letters.

An individual's magical motto could be used to construct notariqons. For example, the initial letters of the Hebrew phrase, "Achath Ruach Elohim Chayyim" (**אחת רוח אלהים חיים**), "One is the Spirit of the Living God," could be contracted to form a new word, *Arech* (**ארא**ח), which could be used as a shortened or cryptic form of a magical motto.

Temurah

This is a method of transposing letters similar to crytography. Using this system, each letter of a word is replaced by another letter, usually in accordance with a chart or table. This can result in a new word that can be compared to the original one to provide new interpretations. Temurah is important for interpreting Qabalistic texts, such as the Torah, and for creating talismans to be used in practical Qabalah or ritual magic.

Avgad: a simple form of temurah in which any letter in a word is replaced by the letter which follows it in the alphabet. Thus the letter Beth could be substituted for Aleph, Daleth for Gimel, etc. Using this method, the motto *Arech* **ארא**ח) mentioned before would become *Beshebet* (**בשבט**). (The gematric value of Arech is 210, and Beshebet is 313. As a note of interest, 210 is the mystic number of the Twentieth Path, which is attributed to Virgo, and 313 is the number of Ananaurah, an angel associated with Virgo.)

Thashrag: the method of writing a word backwards. Using this technique, the motto *Arech* (**ארא**ח) would become *Chara* (**חארא**).

Boustrophedon: a method of writing in alternating lines, one from right to left, and the other from left to right. (The *Shem ha-Mephoresh* was derived from the book of Exodus using this method.) The motto *Arech* could yield four new words by writing it in three lines, one aboye the other as follows:

Arech א ר א ח
Chara ח א ר א
Arech א ר א ח

By reading down the columns of Hebrew letters, we derive the words *Chach* (חאח), *Ara (**אראּ**), Rar* (**ראר**), and *Acha (**אחאּ**)* with the respective values of 17, 202, 401, and 10.

Tziruph: a method of folding the Hebrew alphabet back on itself so that one half may be exchanged for the other half. Then by alternately changing the first letter or first two letters at the beginning of the second line, twenty-four combinations are obtained. These are known as the *Table of the Combinations of Tziruph.*

For an example, we will use the first of the twenty-four combinations known as *Albath:*

11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

K I T Ch **Z** **V** **H** D G **B** A

M N S O **P** Tz **Q** R Sh Th L

Each combination from the Table of the Combinations of Tziruph derives its narre from the first two pairs of letters from both lines (ALBTh or **אלבת**). These letters are the key to the makeup of the system, since either letter in one of the pairs is substituted for the other. Therefore, using the method of Albath, the word *Ruach* (RVCh or רוח) would be transformed finto *Detzau* (DTzO or **רצע**). If we refer again to our motto *Arech* (ARACh or **אראח**) as an example, we would obtain the word *Ledelau* (LDLO or **לדלע**) by using the method of Albath.

There are four other tables used in tziruph called the *Rational Table,* the *Right Table,* the *Averse Table,* and the *Irregular Table.* We will not go into detail about these tables except to say that they are each formed from a square containing 484 lesser squares (22 x 22). The Right Table places the letters of the Hebrew alphabet hito these squares in their natural succession starting from the upper righthand corner going from right to left and from top to bottom. The Averse Table begins the natural succession of the letters starting from the upper left-hand corner of the square from left to right; but also from the lower right-hand corner of the square from bottom to

top. Most of there tables can be found in Appendix II of our book *Self-Initiation into the Golden Dawn Tradition* (pages 735-738).

Alternate Methods of Gematria

Some Qabalists also add hidden meanings to Hebrew words by placing the final form of a letter in the middle of a word, or by not using the usual final form of the letter at the end of a word. (Both would change the numerical value of the entire word.)

There are also ways of encoding esoteric meanings into words by using odd-sized letters or upside-down letters. Meanings may also be obtained by meditating on the shape of the Hebrew letters.

Transliterating Personal Names or Magical Mottos

The process of transliterating personal narres into Hebrew is not an exact science. Variations in the spelling of names, even in English, is common. For example, the name *Wendy* might be written as "Wendy" by one individual. However, the next person might prefer this name spelled "Wyndi." The name *John* could possibly be spelled as "John" or just "Jon." Both names sound alike, but can be spelled in different ways depending on personal preference. The same is true for writing personal names in Hebrew. Rules for the exact transliteration of a personal name finto Hebrew are not carved in stone.

The name *Sandra* can be broken down as before into the Hebrew letters Shin, Nun, Daleth, Resh, and Heh. (Remember that if a word ends with an "A," it is usually transcribed as the Hebrew letter Heh.) However, in Hebrew, there are two letters which could serve to provide the letter "S" in Sandra: Shin or Samekh. Therefore, we could also spell out this name in Hebrew as Samekh, Nun, Daleth, Resh, and Heh.

Hebrew is an alphabet composed mainly of consonants, and we will not be using dageshes to indicate vowel placement, so the first vowel "a" in the name Sandra could be dropped in the Hebrew version of the name, or it could be left in and transcribed as the letter Aleph. Again, this is a matter of personal preference.

So in attempting to transliterate the name "Sandra" into Hebrew, we are faced with having to choose between two or more

versions of the narre. Some thought should be put finto the decision to choose one version over another. After all, Hebrew is a language of numbers, colors, and other hidden attributions. Choose between several ways of writing a personal name in Hebrew by examining the numerical value of each version of the narre.

Let's look at the two ways of transliterating the name "Sandra" finto Hebrew and explore the numbers behind the letters. So we have:

Shin, Nun, Daleth, Resh, Heh 300 + 50 + 4 + 200 + 5 = 559

Samekh, Nun, Daleth, Resh, Heh
60+50+4+200+5=319

The gematria of the two versions are 559 and 319 respectively. By referring to *Godwin's Cabalistic Encyclopedia,* we find that 559 is also the numerical value of *Neqedah Peshutah,* "the Simple Point," a title of Kether. It would be very desirable to associate one's name with such a phrase. In the same book we find that the number 319 is the value of *sarton,* "the crab," or the sign of Cancer. If the zodiacal sign of Cancer was important to one's natal chart, it might be worthwhile to use this version of the name instead.

Both of these numbers can be reduced to a single digit through what is known as *Theosophical Reduction.* This is a method of reducing large numbers to a single digit by a process of adding each digit of the number together. The process is repeated until only one digit remains.

559=5+5+9=19 19=1+9=10 10=1+0=1

319=3+1+9=13 13=1+3=4

Our final numbers are 1 and 4. The version of the name can now be chosen depending on the desired numerical correspondence that we are looking for. The number one is the number of unity and completeness—the divine, eternal source of the universe. It is the number of Kether, the first and highest of the Sephiroth on the Tree of Life. The number four is the number of manifestation, expansion, stability, and growth, and it is the number of the Sephirah Chesed on the Tree of Life.

Suppose we wanted to transliterate the first vowel "a" of the name "Sandra" into Hebrew as well. We could have either:

Shin, Aleph, Nun, Daleth, Resh, Heh
300 + 1 + 50 + 4 + 200 + 5 **= 560**
Samekh, Aleph, Nun, Daleth, Resh, Heh
60+1+50+4+200+5=320

This gives us either 560 or 320. The number 560 is also the gematric value of *mekeshar* or "sorceress," an association which may or may not be desirable. This can be reduced to two (560 = 5 + 6 + 0 =11; 11 = 1 + 1 = 2), the number of the Sephirah Chokmah or "wisdom." The number 320 is also the value of *Saritiel,* an angel of Sagittariusa correspondence which might be useful if the sign of Sagittarius is an important association for us. This number can be reduced to five (320 = 3 + 2 + 0 = 5), the number of Geburah or "strength."

Although it is quite useful to know how to translate one's name into Hebrew for the purpose of gematria, choosing a magical motto is even more effective. A magical name or motto is used by a magician to aid one's focus, assume a magical persona, or cultivate a state of mind that is advantageous in all ceremonial workings. The motto is generally a phrase that makes a statement about the magician's spiritual goal or something that he or she is striving toward in the practice of magic. It is usually translated into Latin, Hebrew, or some other language that is not the magician's usual language of everyday life. A good example is the Hebrew motto *Yehi Aur or* "Let there be Light," which was Allen Bennett's motto in the Golden Dawn's Second Order. *Yehi Aur* (יהי אור) has a value of 232 (י+10 ה5+ו10 + א1 + ו6 + ר200 = 232). Another example mentioned earlier of a Hebrew phrase that would make a good magical motto is *Achath Ruach Elohim Chayyim* (אחת רוה אלהים חיים), "One is the Spirit of the Living God." The gematria of this phrase is 777 or 1337 (the larger number reflects the value of the word when the two final letter Mems are taken into account.)[6] The Old Testament and other Hebrew texts are good sources of phrases that can be used as magical mottos. However, it is also possible to use a resource like *Godwin's Cabalistic Encyclopedia* (Llewellyn,

1979) to string a series of Hebrew words together in order to construct a simple magical motto such as *Ahevah, Chokmah, ve-Tom* (0i11 rl2rlt<), or "Love, Wisdom, and Wholeness," the gematria of which works out to 532 or 1092.

Using these methods, the reader should be able to discover or create a suitable magical motto that will reflect his or her spiritual goals and desired Qabalistic associations.

Sigils

A sigil is a magical symbol that contains the essence of a spirit, deity, or even a human being. It is the magical signature or "calling card" of a spiritual being. Hundreds of examples of sigils can be found in medieval magical texts or *grimoires.* Drawing a sigil enables the magician to focus the mind on a specific spirit or deity he wishes to invoke or communicate with. As stated in the Neophyte Ritual of the Golden Dawn: "By Names and Images are all Powers awakened and re-awakened." A traditional sigil is made by determining the letters in a name and transliterating them into Hebrew.

Aiq Beker

The method known as *Aiq Beker is* an important tool used not only to convert letters into numbers, but also to create sigils and talismans. Aiq Beker is especially important for creating sigils that are to be drawn on *Qameas* or Magical Squares, a series of diagrams associated with the planets, consisting of grids filled with numbers or Hebrew letters.[7] In order to trace the sigil of an angel or spirit name on a Magic Square, it is important to first *reduce* the name to the lowest possible numerical value that will fit on a given Qamea. This is done by referring to the Aiq Beker diagram, also called the *Qabalah of Nine Chambers.* This is a diagram that shows three rows and three columns (nine chambers) of numbers that are grouped together according to the similarity of their numbers. (See Figure 15 on page 188.) For example, in one chamber, Gimel, Lamed, and Shin are placed because of their numbers 3, 30, and 300. The numbers in this diagram, from 1 to 900, are read from right to left, in the

same manner that Hebrew is read. The name Aiq Beker comes from reading the Hebrew letters in the first two chambers from 1 to 200: Aleph, Yod, Qoph, and Beth, Kaph, Resh.

For example, if one wanted to trace the sigil of the intelligence of Saturn, *Agiel,* on the Magical Square of Saturn, the numerical value of each Hebrew letter of the name would have to be reduced to nine or less than nine (since nine is the highest number on the Saturn square). The letters in the name are Aleph = 1, Gimel t = 3, Yod ' = 10, Aleph = 1, and Lamed 5 = 30. The only letters that need to be reduced in this case are Yod and Aleph, which can be reduced to 1 and 3 using the Aiq Beker chart. The numbers obtained which can be used to trace the sigil on the Square are 1, 3, 1, 1, 3. (See Figure 16 on page 189.)

Note: The Saturn square is the simplest of the Qameas, containing only nine cells. Other Qameas, such as the Mars Square, are more complex, and some even contain cells of two digit numbers such as Aleph and Yod (value 11).[8] (See Figure 16 on page 189.)

Another way of using Aiq Beker is to take one of the three letters in any given section of the Aiq Beker diagram and exchange it for one of the other two letters in that section. Thus, in the first box, the letter Qoph could be substituted for either the letter Aleph or the letter Yod. This manner of using Aiq Beker falls somewhat under the category of temurah.

300 30 3 ש ל ג	200 20 2 ר ש ב	100 10 1 ק י א
600 60 6 ם ם ו	500 50 5 ך נ ה	400 40 4 ת מ ד
900 90 9 ץ צ ט	800 80 8 ף פ ח	700 70 7 ן ע ז

Figure 15: Aiq Beker

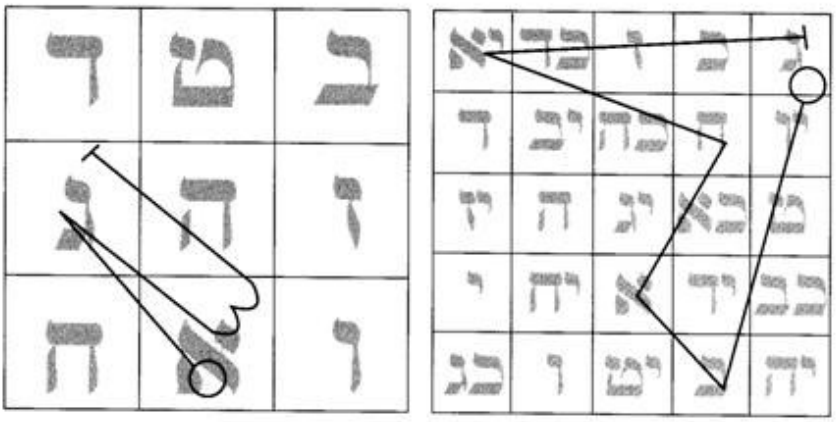


Figure 16: Sigil of Agiel on the Saturn Square (left); Sigil of Graphiel on the Mars Square (right)

Although not a part of the Qabalistic system, the Pythagorean table is worth mentioning in conjunction with Aiq Beker. This Greekbased table shows how our own alphabet can be reduced to numbers:

The Pythagorean Table

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	

*The **Rose** of Twenty-two Petals*

The Rose of Twenty-two Petals is a diagram that was created by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn as an emblem of the Rosicrucian impulse behind the Order. This diagram was a portion of a larger symbol known as the Rose Cross Lamen, which was used for various purposes, including the construction of sigils and talismans to be used in practical magic. (See Figure 17 on page 190.)

In esoteric lore, the rose itself is primarily a symbol of completion, total achievement, perfection, the mystic center, and the heart.

The rose is a feminine symbol associated with regeneration, productivity, and purity. Because the flower unfolds when it blossoms, it is a worthy symbol of spiritual growth, and to the ancient Greeks, it was a symbol of sunrise. The rose is also the sacred flower of Venus, the goddess of love, who is attributed to the seventh Sephirah of Netzach. (Seven is described as the most blessed of all the numbers, and it is also the number assigned to the act of initiation into the mysteries.) On the diagram of the Rose Cross Lamen, the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are placed on the central Rose in accor-dance with the attributions of the *Sepher Yetzirah.* The three inner petals of the Rose are assigned to the three Mother Letters: Aleph, Mem, and Shin. The second ring of petals is composed of the seven Double Letters, which are attributed to the seven ancient planets as well as the seven days of creation and the seven directions in space (east, west, north, south, aboye, below, and center.) The third or outer ring of petals is composed of twelve petals that refer to the twelve Simple Letters. These twelve letters correspond to the twelve signs of the zodiac, the twelve months of the year, and the twelve human properties (sight, hearing, smell, speech, taste, sexual love, work, movement, anger, mirth, imagination, and sleep).

The Golden Dawn's diagram of the Rose of Twenty-two Petals provides a simple yet ingenious system for creating Sephirotic, planetary, or elemental sigils to be used in ceremonial workings. Through this method, an entirely new set of sigils can be drawn, vastly different from medieval sigils created from the traditional Magical Squares. Also, sigils created from the Rose may be of more practical value than those made from the Qameas, because there is no need to refer to a system of mathematical reduction such as Aiq Beker. Sigils are created simply by tracing them on

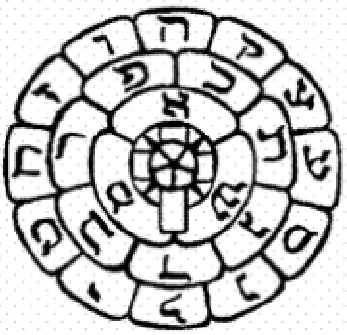


Figure 17: The Rose of Twenty-two Petals

the Rose from letter to letter. Another advantage is that the Rose of Twenty-two Petals is universal symbol—it is *one diagram* as opposed to the system of the Qameas, which depends on seven separate diagrams. The magician can also trace the letters of his or her own name or magical motto on the Rose to create a personal sigil or symbol.

Tracing a Sigil

When tracing a sigil on a Qamea or the Rose of Twenty-two Petals, the first number of the name is marked with a small circle. From there a fine is drawn following the progression of the numbers. When the final number of the name is reached, a short fine is drawn to indicate the completion of the sigil.

Variations in tracing sigils: If two letters of the same kind, such as two Beths or two Gimels, are side-by-side within a name, this is represented in the sigil by a wave or crook in the line at that point. If there is a letter in the name through which the fine of the sigil passes straight through to meet another letter, a loop or noose is formed at that point to indicate that the letter is indeed a part of the name. (Figure 18 shows variations in sigils drawn on the Qamea of the sun.)

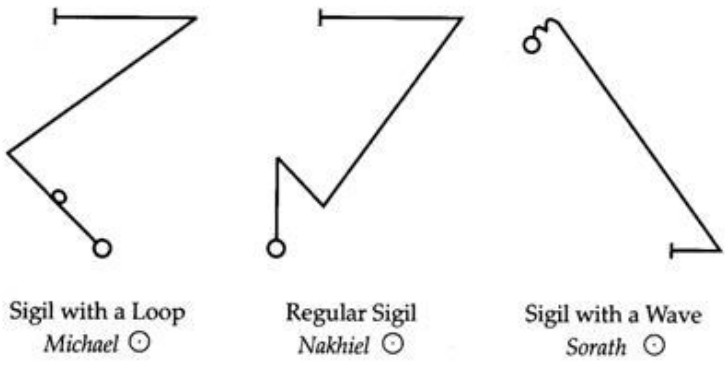


Figure 18: Variations in Sigils

Qabalistic Mantras

A mantra is a word or phrase (usually devotional) that is repeated over and over, audibly or astrally, until the mantra itself remains the only thing that the mirad is aware of. A mantra can be a sound or a word that is connected with a spiritual force or concept, intended to bring about changes in one's inner and outer reality. By constant repetition, the astral body of the practitioner attunes itself to the energy that is inherent within the mantra. Hebrew words and divine names that can be used as mantras include:

Yod Heh Vav Heh—Adonai
Kether—Malkuth
Ve-Geburah—Ve-Gedulah
Eheieh—Agla

The mantra is to be memorized and recited mentally in time with breathing. The first word of the mantra is repeated with the inhalation, and the second word is recited on the exhalation. With a little time, this practice becomes simple and automatic.

A magical motto or a word created from a motto through gematria, notariqon, or temurah can also be used as a mantra. A motto used in this way will become one's own personal phrase of identity—a "power word" that expresses the student's unique spiritual goal. Using our previous example, a student whose motto was *Achath Ruach Elohim Chayyim* could create the personal Qabalistic mantra *Arech—Chara.*

When the practice of combining the mantra with rhythmic breathing has become second-nature, the student can contemplate the meaning of the phrase and what it invokes within. Emotional force can be applied to the mantra, directing the mirad toward the support of the mantra until the focus of concentration is an undeniable fact. The mechanical repetition of the words eventually subdues the wayward mirad, inducing a deep state of contemplation. In due time, this faculty of concentration can be summoned and dismissed at will.

Skrying

As stated in the "Introduction to the Third Edition," the word *skrying* comes from the old English word "descry," meaning "to see." Today the word skrying is usually limited to the idea of perceiving psychic visions by the use of an object, such as a mirror, a crystal, or a bowl of water. Skrying is a method of clairvoyance that involves seeing into the astral world, the invisible blueprint that lies behind all physical manifestation. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn employs three such methods of clairvoyance, although they are not always easily distinguished from one another. They are *Skrying in the Spirit Vision* (or simply skrying), *Traveling in the Spirit Vision* (astral traveling or astral projection), and *Rising in the Planes.* These three techniques can be described as seeing, traveling, and rising.

The Qabalah teaches that everything in the universe is created or "prefabricated" in the astral world of Yetzirah before it manifests in the physical world. The astral plane is a level of reality that is higher than the physical world, but lower than the divine or spiritual world. It is a place that is inbetween—a realm of reflection, images, and dreams. It is sometimes called the *Treasure House of Images* and is said to contain the *Akashic Record* or the *Akashic Library.* This is a part of the astral said to contain all the memories and experiences of humanity over the course of history—embedded within the substance of the ether.

The astral plane is also an inner world of human reality. By Skrying in the Spirit Vision, the magician gazes into this invisible world for knowledge. By using astral projection, the magician enters this world and interacts with angels, elementals, and other beings. When a magician interacts with the elements and spirits, he is working with those archetypes that exist as a part of his own mirad or psychic make-up. But he is also working with the elementals and spirits as they exist in the greater universe around him. ("As aboye, so Below.") These archetypal spirits and beings exist within the mirad of the magician, just as they exist on a larger scale within the mirad of the divine creator of the universe. To interact with one is to interact with the other.

In the Golden Dawn, skrying is usually done by using a painted symbol—such as a tattva or elemental symbol. But it is also performed using geomantic or planetary symbols. Tarot cards make excellent skrying devices. The magician performing astral work, such as skrying, is sometimes referred to as a "seer"or "skryer."

Exploration of the astral realm is very important in magical work. Through astral work, the magician learns to contact higher spiritual realms, examine their landscapes, and bring back information. What we are talking about here is controlled astral visions—meaningful and intense experiences that are completely understandable. In these visions, the skryer maintains complete control and all of his or her powers of choice, willpower, and judgment. Through these experiences, the magician is able to reach the deepest levels of what Carl Jung called the *collective unconscious* or what Hermetic philosophers called *Anima Mundi—the* Soul of the World.

Skrying and astral projection in the Golden Dawn tradition can be described as forms of self-hypnosis which use symbols in order to cause changes in consciousness. From these higher levels of consciousness, the magician often tries to see the underlying causes of things—to work at a problem from a higher angle or perspective—to get inside the machinery of the universe and see just what makes it tick.

Astral work is also performed to call forth spiritual guardians, examine past lives, heal or determine the cause of an illness, or to establish psychic boundaries or astral temples. Once the skryer has reached the astral destination, he or she communicates with elemental beings, spirits, angels, and gods. The skryer carefully describes the experiences on these joumeys to a group or a scribe, or he or she may write them down in a journal or magical diary. The terrain, elemental nature, plants, animals, and inhabitants seen on the journey are all recorded. The skryer also wishes to learn how the astral world influences the physical world, especially the world of human beings.

Astral Projection

In astral projection, the magician travels out of his or her physical consciousness and into the astral plane. It is the partial separation

of the astral body from the physical body. Astral traveling can be compared to a state that is between sleeping and waking. It is a kind of deeply felt waking dream, where the skryer can free himself from the physical body, pass through objects, and explore new places.

To perform Traveling in the Spirit Vision, the magician directs control over his own astral body, which is his etheric double on the astral plane. The astral body is the life-body of feeling and consciousness that exists beyond the physical senses. It is approximately the same size and shape as the physical body. It is this astral body of the magician that moves within and can effect changes within the greater universe through the non-physical worlds.

The single most important aspect of all astral work is that it helps to train the mind—to focus the magician's faculties of intellect, imagination, creativity, intuition, and intention. Consistent and disciplined practice of these methods will gradually fine-tune one's psychic powers of perception and awareness and increase spiritual receptiveness. The psyche of the magician will be better able to see and understand any spiritual information that may be passed down from the Neshamah.

Skrying, like divination, acts as a catalyst that activates the magician's own psychic abilities. But it is a more direct method than either tarot or astrology, because in skrying, the magician deals with the astral plane directly instead of through tarot cards, 1 *Ching* coins, or other devices.

Some people, even some magicians, discount the value of psychic work such as seeing, traveling, and rising as mere daydreaming. And unfortunately, some skryers abuse the art by not taking the proper precautions and safeguards. It is all too easy to become what Francis King called an "astral junkie," or what Israel Regardie liked to call a "cosmic foo-foo." Lacking any real training or discipline in the methods of skrying and astral projection, these individuals can become ungrounded. They lose touch with the material world and can no longer tell the difference between astral events and physical events. They are led into the realms of illusion and self-deception.

It must be remembered that there are two halves to the astral realm: the lower astral (the honre of *maya,* or illusion, full of

phantoms, shadows, and false images created in the lower or reptilian mind of humanity), and the upper astral (the abode of angelic images created in the higher mind of humanity). In legitimate schools of magic, the magician is trained in the proper techniques and disciplines that will help him avoid the pitfalls of the lower astral for the divine images of the upper astral. Training and discipline are crucial to accurate work in the astral plane. A manuscript on clairvoyance printed in Regardie's book *The Golden Dawn* says:

> *The properly trained clairvoyant need have no fear that he will thereby expose himself to the powers of evil. It is the untrained natural clairvoyant who is in danger. Training will give him knowledge, discipline and protection, such as will protect him from the onslaught of the averse powers.*
>
> *On the other hand, let him who desires to save himself the trouble and to gain knowledge to which he has no claim, be very well assured that only "in the sweat of his brow" can he obtain this power and exercise it in security. And that he who seeks to gratify his curiosity will either be mortified by disappointment or distressed by discoveries he would much prefer not to have made. Trained, humble, and reverent clairvoyance is a great gift, opening up new worlds and deeper truths, lifting us out of ourselves into the great in-pouring and out-pouring of the heart of God.*[9]

Skrying in the Spirit Vision: Procedure

Careful preparation will make any ritual or meditation more successful, because it helps to focus the mind and give a firm sense of purpose. The magician should set up the temple and dress in ceremonial robes. The skrying symbol should be close at hand. For our example, let's say that the magician wants to skry into the Eleventh Path of the Qabalah. His chosen symbol might be the tarot trump of *The Fool.*

1. A banishing ritual such as the LBRP is performed to set up the sacred space (unless the magician is in the Vault of the Adepti). The room is purified with fire and water.
2. The magician holds in his hand the implement which corresponds to the desired element, such as a rose, a fan, or the Air Dagger (since the Eleventh Path is attributed to air). This has the effect of focusing the will.

3. At this point, the magician stands and performs the Supreme Invoking Ritual of the element (in this case, air) in all four quarters. The (air) pentagram is traced in all four quarters or the temple.
4. The skryer should then sit back in a chair, facing the quarter of the desired element, and relax, with the skrying symbol in hand. The magician looks at the card for some time until it becomes a kind of thought vision that remains after the eyes are closed.
5. When the mind is focused fully on the image, the magician closes his eyes and continues the meditation. The image of the symbol is seen in reverse or flashing color. (This is a reflex optical effect that the skryer takes advantage of.) He lets the image remain in his mind as if his eyes were still open. The physical vision slides into astral vision—the reality of dream vision in a conscious state.
6. The appropriate divine names should be vibrated several times.
7. In skrying, the image of the symbol appears like a window into another world. The symbol keeps its shape, but its color becomes transparent, as though one were looking through glass. The magician looks on some landscape or scene that is reflected finto the image of the symbol. Objects appear reversed, just as they would be if reflected in a mirror. The images seen are alive but flat and two-dimensional, like watching a movie. Continue to build the landscape until it becomes clear.
8. Figures and beings that relate to the element may be seen. It is important to constantly test the scene with the appropriate divine names and elemental symbols.
9. When finished with the vision, the magician dissolves the mental image he has created and performs a banishing.

***Traveling in** the Spirit Vision: Procedure*

Astral projection is very closely related to skrying, and many of the Golden Dawn techniques for both are similar. In skrying, the magician merely observes an astral vision, but does not project himself

into it. Skrying is two-dimensional; astral projection is three-dimensional. Skrying is somewhat flat and observant. Astral traveling is more interactive.

1. The temple is set up as before, with the appropriate banishings and purifications.
2. Let's assume that the magician wants to travel on the Eleventh Path of the Tree of Life. As in skrying, he would hold the appropriate elemental implement and perform the Supreme Invoking Pentagram Ritual of Air in all four quarters.
3. The magician sits facing the air quarter (east) and holds the tarot card of *The Pool* in his hand and stares at it intently.
4. When his mind is focused fully on the image, the magician closes his eyes and continues the meditation. (If a tattva or elemental symbol is used in place of a tarot card, the image of the symbol is seen in the reverse or flashing color of the symbol.)
5. The magician imagines it becoming very large, like a huge door that is large enough to walk through. He prepares to project himself astrally through the image of the tarot card.
6. The best way to enter the symbol is to use the *Projection Sign,* also called the *Sign of the Enterer.* (Bring the arms up as if touching Kether, then bring the hands down to either side of the head at eye level—fingers extended, hands held flat with palms down. Then step forward with the left foot, at the same time thrust the arms directly forward, and sink the head till the eyes look exactly between the thumbs.)

   The Projection Sign is followed by the *Sign of Silence.* (Bring the left foot back sharply, both heels together—stamp the ground once with the left foot as it is placed beside the right. Bring the left hand to the mouth and touch the center of the lower lip with the left forefinger. Close the other fingers and thumb and drop the right hand to the side.)

   It is recommended that the magician physically rise to his feet (still visualizing the reverse image in his mind with eyes closed), and perform the Sign. Then, imagining that he has passed through it, he sits down and continues the vision.

7. The magician then visualizes the symbol behind him. Next, he looks for objects, beings, or a landscape. He should try to feel as if he were inside the tarot card. Now the magician should to try to see images in three dimensions, as though he were inside the scene instead of merely watching it.
8. Before anything else happens, the magician should vibrate the divine and angelic names that are appropriate to the path. The names should be physically vibrated several times.
9. The landscape may change as the names are vibrated. It may become more clearly defined. A being may appear whose clothing and appearance corresponds to the desired path. The skryer should wait until one of these "guides" appears, or until he feels that a guide is present. (Sometimes there is no clear vision of these guides, but only a powerful intuition that a guide has manifested.)
10. The magician must then test the being to make sure that it is a true guide and not just an astral deception. The magician should assume the grade sign of the element attributed to the pathphysically as well as astrally.

    Earth: the Zelator Sign— raise the right arm straight up in a fortyfive degree angle from the body, hand held flat with the thumb facing toward the ceiling.

    Air: the Theoricus Sign—bend both arms at the elbow. Keep the hands at the level of the head, palms upward as if supporting a great weight.

    Water: the Practicus Sign—form a triangle apex downward over the chest with the thumbs and index fingers of both hands. Keep the elbows level with the shoulders.

    Fire: the Philosophus Sign—form a triangle apex upwards on the forehead with the thumbs and index fingers of both hands, palms outward.

    A true guide should be able to give any of these signs. If it is a false guide, it will show distress or disappear altogether.
11. The magician should clearly ask the being if he or she comes to act as a guide in the name of the appropriate divine name. If all

is answered to the magician's satisfaction, he proceeds to follow the guide, taking note of where he goes and asking questions about the element or whatever he sees.

12. If at any time the magician is unsure of the truth of the vision, he should test it. The elemental grade signs, the vibration of divine names, and the tracing of appropriate pentagrams are symbols which have a powerful effect on the elemental native of the astral. These tests will uncover any possible deception. It's not often necessary to trace a pentagram. The vibration of the divine Hebrew names is usually enough.
13. If the magician uses a compound element (or a sub-element) such as water of air, he may find himself being brought from one guide to another, and from one plane to another. The same tests should be applied to the new guide. The divine names of the secondary element should be vibrated and the appropriate grade sign given. If satisfied, the magician proceeds.
14. Always treat astral beings with respect in accordance with their rank, especially the higher forms: gods, archangels, angels, and rulers. Elementals should be treated with polite firmness. And it's a good practice to imagine yourself taller than your guide.
15. To end the astral journey, the magician simply reverses the process. After thanking the guide, the magician retraces his path and finds the astral door or tarot card. He passes through the door with the Sign of the Enterer (the Neophyte's Projection Sign). He takes a few moments to adjust to normal consciousness. Finally, he stands up and gives the Sign of Silence. A banishing ritual should be performed.

Skrying and Astral Traveling: Protections

There should be no blending of the astral plane into normal consciousness. To avoid this, it is best to follow definite techniques when coming and going from astral journeys.

If you have any doubts about an entity that you encounter in your journey, always, always test it with divine names, grade signs, or even an elemental pentagram. If you ever feel threatened by a

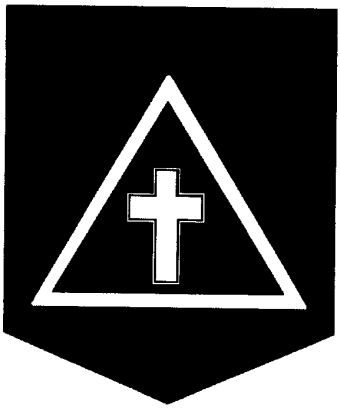


Figure 19: Banner of the West

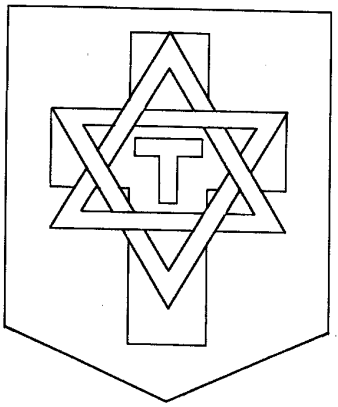


Figure 20: Banner of the East

astral being, you can mentally create an image of the Banner of the West—a symbol used in Golden Dawn ritual to bar evil and keep it at bay. (See Figure 19.) An evil entity will disappear immediately at the sight of the banner, while a helpful being will not mirad being tested. No balanced force will ever resent being tested with the banner.

Also, the Golden Dawn's Banner of the East (Figure 20) may be used in the vision to aid the magician. This is the banner that representa the light of the divine. You can visualize it being wrapped around you like a cloak. This is a powerful way to invoke balanced power and light to aid you in all astral work.

There are also certain symbols that can be traced to help clarify an astral vision, since the magician does not want the vision to be influenced by tricks of memory or imagination. The Hebrew letters of the seven planets can be used as important test symbols. The Golden Dawn teachings on skrying suggest the following:

1. If you suspect that some image from your memory is influencing your vision, trace the symbol of the letter Tau ת in white light. (Tau is the letter of Saturn, the planet which governs memory.)
2. If you think that you have constructed the scene in your imagination, rather than receiving a true astral image, trace the letter Kaph כ (Kaph is the letter of Jupiter, the planet of construction.)

3. To vanquish feelings of revenge or hatred, use Peh ,the letter of Mars.
4. To rid yourself of delusions of arrogance and inflated ego, use Resh the letter of the Sun.
5. If your vision lapses into a pleasure-seeking fantasy or intellectual vanity, use Daleth , the letter of Venus.
6. If you suspect that what you are looking at is a deception or a falsehood, use Beth , the letter of Mercury.
7. For wandering thoughts, use Gimel the letter of the moon.

If the scene disappears or changes after tracing any of these symbols, then banish with a pentagram and start over with the vision to see if a different scene appears.

At times it's possible to spend too much of your energy tracing test symbols. In such a case you can bring some energy back into yourself by performing the Neophyte Signs (The Projection Sign followed by the Sign of Silence). After continued practice of these methods in skrying and astral projection, the clairvoyant abilities of the magician will gradually increase. Over time, these visions will grow from faint pictures to dynamic and powerful experiences. But even when these powerful experiences occur, the magician should never take them at face value or fail to test them.

Pathworking

These techniques of skrying and astral traveling used by the Golden Dawn foreshadowed the methods used by later groups. Writing on the subject of skrying and astral projection, John W. Brodie-Innes (Frater Sub Spe), an important figure in the original Golden Dawn, described what is essentially a precursor to a modem pathworking:

> *… the Seer should formulate in imagination a vast pylon, and within its Bates he should visualize the Hebrew Letter Tau, the 32nd Path. This should be preceded* by *a study of the Ritual of the Theoricus Grade, especially the Rite of the Kerubic Stations. Then, imagining himself passing through this Letter Tau, and entering the Pylon, he should proceed to make the appropriate Pentagrams and Hexagrams, and vibrating the Divine Names appropriate to that plane. The resulting vision should be*

> *similar to the passage of the Path in the ceremony, but whereas this latter was purely symbolic, the former may be real and dynamic, and may develop finto an initiation in the true sense of the word. The same technique may be applied to every Path and to every Sephirah.*[10]

A true pathworking is a guided visualization or meditation on one of the Qabalah's twenty-two Navitoth, which is usually read aloud (to a group) from a prepared script. It is the ascent of the Tree of Life through the use of the imagination, wherein the magician "travels" from Sephirah to Sephirah by way of vividly "imaged" excursions through the symbolic scenery of the paths. The twentytwo Navitoth are best suited for pathworkings since they are considered more subjective than are the ten "objective" Sephiroth, and are thus much more influenced by personal experience.

The pathworkings given in Chapters Ten, Eleven, and Twelve are derived partly from our own skrying experiences and developed into narratives designed to give the reader a type of static skrying exercise, which might be similar but certainly not identical to the experiences of others. A true skrying experience would be entirely dynamic, personal, and unique to the one performing it in "real time"—not predesigned or scripted. Pathworkings, such as those provided in this book, are a safe, easy alternative to full skryings. While skrying and astral traveling should only be undertaken after a long period of advanced magical training, one does not have to be a fully trained adept to experience a pathworking.

The thirty-two pathworkings provided in the chapters that follow will furnish the reader with a rich source of Qabalistic knowledge that can be readily experienced with a modicum of effort. They will enable the student to actively perceive the energies of the Tree of Life firsthand, and transform archival knowledge into real knowledge. And with time and training, the student will eventually be able to travel up the Tree unaided, free to experience his or her own unique skrying visions.

It should be remembered that scripted pathworkings are no substitute for *personal understanding* of one's unique experiences and insights—no single set of prefabricated symbols, selected deities, or narrated visualizations will work for everyone.

Rising On the Planes

Another method of astral work that developed out of the technique of Traveling in the Spirit Vision is called *Rising on the Planes.* This process uses the Tree of Life to experience higher Qabalistic realms of reality.

The magician begins by imagining that he stands in the sphere of Malkuth on a huge Tree of Life whose Kether is lost in the heights aboye. As he stands in Malkuth, he vibrates the divine name of the tenth Sephirah.

Next, he vibrates the divine name of Yesod and visualizes Hmself rising upwards through the Path of Tau to reach the ninth Sephirah.

From Yesod, the Path of Samekh leads upward to Tiphareth. The divine name of Tiphareth is vibrated as the magician imagines himself ascending the path.

Once in Tiphareth, MacGregor Mathers suggested that the skryer might imagine himself bound to a cross, where he would invoke the mighty angel Hua and ask for guidance in order to reach the Crown of Kether.

The process of Rising on the Planes does not Nave to end with the crossing of one Tree. The skryer can also journey upwards on four complete Trees of Life, which represent the Sephiroth in the Four Qabalistic Worlds of Assiah, Yetzirah, Briah, and Atziluth. (From Kether of Assiah, he could travel to Malkuth of Yetzirah-and continue upwards toward the source.)

By visualizing oneself ascending different parts of the Tree of Life in the various Qabalistic worlds and vibrating the god-names that correspond to the spheres and paths, the sincere magician may find himself rising toward the spiritual light. He may encounter many powerful mystical experiences that are somewhat different from other exercises, such as the Middle Pillar Ritual.

RISING ON THE PLANES EXERCISE

From Malkuth of Assiah to Kether of Atziluth

This exercise explores the various Sephiroth of the Middle Pillar in Assiah, the material realm. It culminates in reaching Kether of Assiah, which in turn becomes Malkuth of Yetzirah, the astral realm. Keep in mirad that this is in reality *a guided visualization* of one person's abbreviated experience in Rising on the Planes. It is offered here to be used as an illustrated example of what *might* occur during such an exercise. We fully anticipate that our readers may Nave different experiences and visions using this same technique.

It should also be noted that this is the long version of Rising on the Planes—one that explores all four Qabalistic worlds. Readers may wish to stop at any one of the four points (or worlds) described in the exercise. Just remember that when you are finished rising up the Tree, descend exactly the way you carne.

Keep in mirad that human consciousness cannot begin to comprehend the higher planes of the Tree, especially with regard to the Supernals in the world of Atziluth. Any scripted visualization of the higher realms will ultimately fail to portray a valid picture of them, although they may serve to stimulate personal spiritual insights.

Point One: Assiah

Close your eyes. Breathe deeply and rhythmically. Relax. Vibrate the secret name of the world of Assiah, "**Ben.**"[11]

See yourself standing on a large sphere. This is Malkuth of Assiah, Malkuth in the active, material plane. Vibrate the divine name of Malkuth, "**Adonai ha-Aretz**" (Ah-doe-nye Ha-Ah-retz), a number of times and bring the sphere to life. See the planet earth under your feet, grounding you. You stand on the Sephirah. Far below you, the rest of humanity is busy with the hustle and bustle of daily life. Malkuth in Assiah is colored black with rays of yellow. It is a dark, earthy sphere that is streaked with gold—glimmers of the hidden stone buried in the center of the black, material earth.

Now turn your attention to the sphere of Yesod aboye your head. High aboye you is Yesod, hanging like the full moon in the

indigo night sky. Connecting Malkuth to Yesod is the Path of Tau, which appears as a large shaft of white light aboye your head leading upwards. Vibrate the divine name of the path of Tau *one* time: "**YHVH Elohim**" (Yod Heh Vav Heh El-oh-heem). Then vibrate the god-name of Yesod a number of times: "**Shaddai El Chai**" (Shah-dye El-Chai). As you do so, *will* yourself to ascend the shaft of light, rising to the level of Yesod.

You rise to the level of Yesod of Assiah. You are surrounded by a light greenish, citrine brilliance, accented with flecks of blue, like blue fireflies moving through the atmosphere of Yesod. In the world of Assiah, Yesod is a mirror of Malkuth, but on a level that is less tangible and more ethereal. It almost seems as if you are standing like an astronaut on the moon, looking down at the planet earth from the expanse of space.

Next, you turn your attention to the sphere of Tiphareth aboye your head. The yellow-orange orb of the sixth Sephirah shines brightly overhead, like the sun in the midday sky. Connecting Yesod to Tiphareth is the Path of Samekh, a tunnel or shaft of white light aboye your head that extends into the heavens. Vibrate the divine name of the Path of Samekh *one* time: "**Elohim**" (El-ohheem). Then vibrate the god-name of Tiphareth a number of times: "**YHVH Eloah Ve-Daath**" (Yod Heh Vav Heh El-oh-ah Veh-Daath). *Will* yourself to rise up the shaft of light. As you ascend, you pass through a veil, the veil of Paroketh, and continue upward until you reach the level of Tiphareth.

Upon reaching the level of Tiphareth in Assiah, you are bathed in a golden amber light. It is warm here, and you feel a corresponding warmth in your heart, your own inner sun. It is peaceful, and you feel very centered here. As you gaze back the way you carne, it seems as though you are standing on the sun, the star of our solar system. Below you are the planets Mercury, Venus, and our own planet earth, with its satellite, Luna.

High aboye you is the Abyss, a dark rift in the cosmos. Within this chasm lies the passageway of Daath, a sphere-shaped hole in the fabric of the universe. A white shaft of light, the Path of Gimel, reaches upward toward this hole. Daath is a primary junction where various forces on the Tree come together. Yet it is also a barrier that

you must pass beyond if you wish to scale the Tree. You desire to reach the highest realms of the Tree and so you vibrate the divine name of the path of Gimel *one* time: "**Shaddai El Chai.**" Then vibrate the god-name that activates Daath, "**YHVH Elohim,**" several times.

You rise up the shaft of light that is the Path of Gimel. At length you enter the area of Daath, a nebulous cloud of gray brilliance. Tiny flecks of gold dance around you, as if portions of Tiphareth were filtering down from the Supernals and back again. This time, you have no sensation of solidity beneath your feet, and as you look backward, down the Path of Gimel, it seems as though you are looking down through the blackness of space at the edge of our solar system, near the giant planets of Saturn and Jupiter. The constellations array themselves in splendor all around you.

Once more, you look to what is above you. Kether in Assiah appears as a white orb surrounded by a golden glory. The shining Path of Gimel continues through the Abyss and connects with Kether at the apex of the Assiatic world. You vibrate the divine name of the path of Gimel one time: "**Shaddai El Chai.**" Then vibrate the god-name that activates Kether, "**Eheieh**" (Eh-hey-yay), numerous times. Willing yourself to rise, you climb the path that leads to the first Sephirah.

You enter the sphere, which is filled with a dazzling pure white. You gaze down at your own body to find that your hands and robes are bleached with white light. You are aware of a swirling motion in the middle of the sphere. You can barely see the outline of what looks like a swastica or fylfot cross spinning within the white clouds of light. Flecks of yellow are thrown into the mist surrounding the cross, like burning embers exploding forth from a roaring fire. As you look behind you now, the solar system seems small and insignificant.

Point Two: Yetzirah

You desire to press onward—to explore the worlds that lie beyond Assiah. Vibrate the secret name of the world of Yetzirah, "**Mah.**" Continue to breathe deeply and rhythmically. Maintain a state of total relaxation.

Now, vibrate the divine name of Malkuth: "**Adonai Ha-Aretz.**" See yourself rising up to the top of the Sephirah of Kether. The color of the sphere changes from white to a multitude of colors: greenish citrine, dark green-olive, red russet, and black. Flecks of gold waft through the atmosphere like the seeds of a dandelion. Kether of Assiah has become Malkuth in Yetzirah, Malkuth in the astral, formative world. Vibrate the divine narre of Malkuth, "**Adonai Ha-Aretz,**" a number of times and bring the sphere to life. All around you are the *Ashim,* or "Souls of Fire," the angels assigned to the sphere of Malkuth. They appear as tongues of flame, and they often gather around temples, churches, and other sites of worship, blessing these places with their presence. One class of the Ashim are the *Mesharthim,* the "Attendants." The Mesharthim include those human souls who have evolved sufficiently to become ministers and messengers of the spirit.[12]

Now, turn your attention to the sphere of Yesod aboye your head. It appears as a dark purple orb hanging in the night sky. Vibrate the divine name of the Path of Tau one time: "**YHVH Elohim.**" Then vibrate the god-name of Yesod, "**Shaddai El Chai,**" a number of times as before. As you do so, *will* yourself to ascend the shaft of light that is the Tau path. Rise up to the level of Yesod in Yetzirah.

Once you reach the ninth sphere, you are struck by the purple atmosphere. You look down at your own body and are surprised to see yourself outlined in yellow against the purple darkness, as if you have been transformed into a photographic negative. All around you are flickering lights, geometric shapes, images, and movements that indicate you are in the astral world. Symbols and figures appear suddenly then disappear in the astral mists of *maya,* the realm of illusion. This is the Treasurehouse of Images, the repository of all the collective thoughts, dreams, and images of humanity.

The mighty Kerubim, the angelic host of Yesod, appear before you. They take on the form of many-winged sphinxes who serve as the guardiana and guides to the higher planes. Some are humanheaded, and some have the heads of animals. They regard you with their many eyes before they fade into the purple mist.

Next, you turn your attention to the sphere of Tiphareth aboye your head. Vibrate the divine name of the Path of Samekh *one* time: "**Elohim.**" Then vibrate the god-name of Tiphareth, "**YHVH Eloah Ve-Daath,**" a number of times. Will yourself to rise up the shaft of light that is the Path of Samekh. You pass through the veil of Paroketh, and continue upward until you reach the level of Tiphareth in Yetzirah.

In this realm, Tiphareth is bathed in a rich salmon-pink light. Again you are struck by the feeling of harmony and balance connected with the sixth Sephirah. But you feel lighter than before, as if in scaling the Tree of Life, you were leaving the earth's gravity behind. A group of pink-robed figures emerge from the mists. They are the *Melakim,* the angelic host of Tiphareth. They are also the host of the Holy Guardian Angels themselves. Their duty is to bestow unqualified love and respect on those worthy aspirants who come into contact with them. They prepare the initiate for the realization of their vocation—the purpose for which they have been prepared.

But your path lies upward. High aboye you in the Abyss is the gateway of Daath. To reach the highest levels of Yetzirah, you vibrate the divine name of the Path of Gimel *one* time: "**Shaddai El Chai.**" Then vibrate the god-name that activates Daath, "**YHVH Elohim,**" several times as you did earlier.

You rise up the shaft of light that is the Path of Gimel. At length you enter the hazy, violet Sephirah-shaped cloud of Daath in Yetzirah. Daath has no angelic host of its own, but through Daath's gateway to the Supernals, you envision that the angelic host of Binah is visible from this level. The *Erelim,* or "Thrones," of Binah only involve themselves in the lives of humans when the initiates have attained a degree of balance and spiritual clarity in their lives. Their forms are concealed behind dark robes with hoods. The Erelim are stable, motionless, and enigmatic from your perspective in Daath.

Once more, you look to what lies beyond. Kether in Yetzirah is high aboye you, a brilliant white orb suspended like a star in the heavens. The Path of Gimel continues through the Abyss and connects with Kether at the summit of the Yetziratic world. You vibrate the divine name of the Path of Gimel *one* time: "**Shaddai El Chai.**"

Then vibrate the god-name that activates Kether, "**Eheieh,**" numerous times. Willing yourself to rise, you ascend the path that leads to the first Sephirah.

You enter the pure white light of Kether, surprised that although the sheer whiteness of the sphere makes it difficult to see, its brilliance does not seem to hurt your eyes. Massive, winged figures like the Kerubim, clothed only in white, become visible to you. They are the *Chayoth ha-Qodesh,* or "Holy Living Creatures," the angelic host of Kether. These are the angels who keep the initiate aligned with the highest in all spiritual workings. They also increase the flow of divine light from Kether into the initiate's Yechiah, revitalizing him with more life-force.

Point Three: Briah

Your journey to the various worlds of the Tree continues. You Nave explored the realm of Yetzirah. Now vibrate the secret name of the world of Briah, "**Seg.**" Continue to breathe deeply and rhythmically while maintaining a relaxed state.

Intone the divine name of Malkuth, "**Adonai Ha-Aretz.**" **See** yourself rising up to the summit of Kether. The color of the sphere changes from white to a multitude of colors: greenish citrine, dark green-olive, red russet, and black. Kether of Yetzirah has become Malkuth in Briah—Malkuth in the creative, archangelic world. Vibrate the divine name of Malkuth, "**Adonai Ha-Aretz,**" a number of times and bring the sphere to life. A figure materializes before you, a mature woman of grace and power, with great black and white feathered wings. Her robes are also in the four colors of citrine, olive, russet, and black. A white Greek cross is embroidered on her chest. She is surrounded by the four elements in their primal essence. Sandalphon is archangel of Malkuth, the ruler of the Ashim, and the personification of the *Anima Mundi,* or "Soul of the World." She is the life-changing archangel of initiation and a primary guardian who keeps watch over initiates. It is also her duty to mediate and sort out the energies of the Tree that will be brought forth into manifestation.

Now turn your attention to the sphere of Yesod aboye your head. It appears as a'violet orb hanging in the night sky aboye you.

Vibrate the divine name of the Path of Tau *one* time: "**YHVH Elohim.**" Then vibrate the god-name of Yesod, "**Shaddai El Chai,**" a number of times. As you do so, *will* yourself to ascend the light shaft of the Tau path. Rise up to the level of Yesod in Briah.

Once you reach the ninth sphere, you are surrounded by a swirling purple fog. You look down at your own body—you no longer see yourself as a photographic negative like you did in Yesod of Yetzirah. Everything here seems softened around the edges, and you get the feeling that if you tried to clasp your hands together, they would pass right through each other.

A vesica-shaped portal of light forms in the fog. A beautiful woman steps through it. She is dressed in robes of violet, and mighty wings of violet and yellow grace her shoulders. This is Gabriel, archangel of Yesod and ruler of the Kerubim. In her hands she carries a magic mirror. Gabriel is the great Annunciator, Guardian, and Guide. She gives us the powers of vision and hearing, as well as the powers of life and procreation. She is a prophetess, and from the sphere of Yesod, she often speaks to humans through dreams.

Next, you turn your attention to the sphere of Tiphareth aboye your head. Vibrate the divine name of the Path of Samekh one time: "**Elohim.**" Then vibrate the god-name of Tiphareth, "**YHVH Eloah Ve-Daath,**" a number of times. *Will* yourself to rise up the Path of Samekh, a white tunnel of light. The veil of Paroketh parts around you, and you continue to ascend to the level of Tiphareth in Briah.

You reach Tiphareth and are immersed in a brilliant golden-yellow. The sense of utter tranquility is overwhelming—you would be content to stay in this place for a long, long time. A human form emerges from the golden mist—a male figure of unparalleled beauty and charisma—wearing robes of yellow with a violet hexagram emblazoned on the chest. This is Raphael, archangel of Tiphareth and ruler of the Melekim. Raphael stands at the heart of the Tree of Life, and his influence is felt in every Sephiroth except Malkuth. He is a healer and a teacher who provides balance, inspiration, and knowledge to the initiate. He nurtures humanity with his unbounded compassion, and he heals all wounds, both physical and spiritual.

But your experience of Rising on the Planes must go on. Daath in Briah waits beyond. You vibrate the divine name of the Path of

Gimel *one* time: "**Shaddai El Chai.**" Then vibrate the god-name that activates Daath, "**YHVH Elohim,**" several times.

You rise up the white shaft of the Path of Gimel. At length you enter a light-gray area of haze. Daath has no archangel, but through Daath's doorway to the Supernals, you see the archangel of Binah, who is visible from this level. Tzaphqiel is the archangel of Binah and the ruler of the Erelim. She is barely visible to you, because her grayish robe has no highlights and her head and face are covered by a gray veil. You probably would not even see her were it not for the white triangle on her breast. Tzaphqiel is the "eye of God," watching and observing all. She is the force of formation behind all mystical groups, and she governs the art of meditation. Tzaphqiel seems remote and detached. From this vantage point in Daath, you don't get much of a sense of her.

Kether of Briah beckons overhead, a gloriously brilliant white sphere at the top of the Path of Gimel. You vibrate the divine name of the Gimel path *one* time: "**Shaddai El Chai.**" Then vibrate the god-name that activates Kether, "**Eheieh,**" numerous times. Willing yourself to rise, you pass through the Abyss and scale the path that leads to the first Sephirah.

You arrive in a brilliant white sphere that is so stunningly bright, you can hardly see your hand in front of your face. A great being of light resides there, one who is only visible to you indirectly through a sheer wisp of a veil. This is Metatron, archangel of Kether and ruler of the Chayoth haQodesh. He appears as a mature, robust man dressed in robes of the purest white, without the faintest shadow of any kind. His massive wings are iridescent white—they shimmer with all the colors of the rainbow. Metatron presides over the entire Tree of Life. Legend has it that Metatron communicated the Qabalah to humanity for he is the connecting link between humans and the divine.

Point Four: Atziluth

This is the final phase of your journey into the Qabalistic worlds. Only the lofty realm of Atziluth remains. You vibrate the secret name of the world of Atziluth, "**Aub.**" Breathe deeply and remain relaxed.

Intone the divine name of Malkuth, "**Adonai Ha-Aretz.**" See yourself rising up to the summit of Kether. The color of the sphere changes from white brilliance to pure yellow. Kether of Briah has become Malkuth in Atziluth—Malkuth in the archetypal world of pure deity. Vibrate the divine name of Malkuth, "**Adonai Ha-Aretz,**" a number of times and bring the sphere to life. No humanlike figures appear in this realm. But you are granted an image of a vast kingdom, with rolling fields of grain, rivers of clear pure water, and pristine villages of marble buildings placed against the backdrop of snow-covered mountains. The land to the east is in spring, the land to the west is in autumn. The land to the south is in summer, and the land to the north is in winter. This is a vision of the archetypal kingdom, the body of God, the Lord of Earth.

You gaze up at the sphere of Yesod aboye your head. On this level, Yesod appears as a blue-violet sphere high overhead. Vibrate the divine name of the Path of Tau *one* time: "**YHVH Elohim.**" Then vibrate the god-name of Yesod, "**Shaddai El-Chai,**" several times. As you do so, *will* yourself to ascend the light shaft of the Tau path. Rise up to the level of Yesod in Atziluth.

Once you have reached the ninth sphere, you are immersed in an indigo light, where you are afforded a vision of a barren tree. As you gaze on this vision, new buds form on the tree's branches. As they grow, the buds unfurl to become lush, green leaves. Other buds also form—on opening they become soft white blossoms. The blossoms quickly turn into green fruit. The fruit grows larger until it turns red and ripe. You understand from this image that Yesod is the foundation of regeneration and the very secrets of life itself.

Looking upward, you turn your attention to the sphere of Tiphareth aboye your head. Vibrate the divine name of the Path of Samekh *one* time: "**Elohim.**" Then vibrate the god-name of Tiphareth, "**YHVH Eloah Ve-Daath,**" a number of times. *Will* yourself to rise up the Path of Samekh in a shaft of white light. You cleave open the veil of Paroketh and continue up to the level of Tiphareth in Atziluth.

The sixth Sephirah greets you with a pure rose-pink light. The divine intelligence here is all knowing. You are at the central hub of the Tree at its highest level. You don't want to move. Instead you

have the instinctive feeling that if you remain still and calm and tranquil, you will come to have a profound understanding of the divine.

It is difficult to continue, because it has been a long journey. You wish you could just rest in Tiphareth, taking in pieces of knowledge that travel up and down the Tree at this important junction of communication. Before you is an image of a golden key, a symbol used to unlock the mysteries of God. Knowing that it will give you the strength to go on, you grasp the key in your hand. Now a large black calvary cross appears before you. Stepping up to this cross, you will yourself to be bound to it. Fettered to the cross; you invoke the rnighty equilibriating angel HUA to lend his guidance on the pathway of the light. You feel the presence of wings fluttering around you. You vibrate the divine name of the Path of Gimel *one* more time: "**Shaddai El Chai.**" Then vibrate the god-name that activates Daath, "**YHVH Elohim,**" several times as before.

Rising up the white shaft of the Path of Gimel, you enter a lavender haze which is Daath. You get the feeling that you are traveling backwards in time, back to the birth of the universe. The image of a flaming sword, shaped like a boli of lightning, appears before you briefly, then vanishes. All the knowledge that you have learned up to this point in your life now seems trivial.

Your final destination, Kether of Atziluth, beckons overhead. A sphere so brilliant it cannot even be described in terms of color, only in luminescence. You vibrate the divine name of the Gimel path *one* time: "**Shaddai El Chai.**" Then vibrate the god-name that activates Kether, "**Eheieh,**" numerous times. *Willing* yourself to rise, you leave the Abyss behind and ascend the path to the first Sephirah.

You enter the sphere of utmost brilliance of Kether in the divine world of Atziluth. You can no longer distinguish between yourself and the surrounding light. All is pure divine light. There is no difference, no distinction. You and the light are one. No strife. No contention. No duality. You experience the profound peace and simple truth of knowing that this divine brilliance is connected to all things in the cosmos. Unity is all. And you are a part of every other part of existence.

Descending the Planes

At length, you desire to return the way you carne. Do not rush and do not plunge down suddenly. You descend steadily from Kether of Atziluth, down the Path of Gimel. You pass through the passageway of Daath through the Abyss. You move downward through Tiphareth and continue down the Path of Samekh to Yesod. From Yesod, you descend the Path of Tau to Malkuth.

Malkuth becomes the Kether of Briah, and you pass down through the world of Briah in the same manner: from Kether to Daath, Tiphareth, and Yesod to Malkuth.

Malkuth of Briah becomes Kether of Yetzirah, and you continue your downward trek: Kether to Daath, Tiphareth, and Yesod to Malkuth.

Malkuth of Yetzirah becomes Kether of Assiah, and you continue to descend from Kether to Daath, Tiphareth, and Yesod to Malkuth. Finally, you stand once more on the black-and-yellow-rayed sphere of Malkuth in Assiah. You are again grounded to the earth.

Bring yourself back to the physical room around you. Begin to breathe normally and feel the weight of your body. When you are ready, you may open your eyes, but do not get up right away. Take time to acclimate.



Synthesis: A Daily Curriculum

All the books on Qabalah ever written do one little good if Qabalistic teachings are not put into practice. It is important that the student commit to a daily routine, a regimented course of study wherein portions of Qabalistic knowledge are assimilated gradually over time and incorporated into daily life. This routine should include a certain amount of both study and meditation or ritual exercise. The following course of study is designed to take vine months to complete.

Materials Needed

The student should obtain a pack of 3" x 5" note cards and a tarot deck (the *Rider-Waite Tarot, The New Golden Dawn Ritual Tarot,* or some other traditional tarot deck.)

Take ten of the note cards and number them from one to ten, in large numbers, one card to represent each of the ten Sephiroth. On the back of the cards, write down information about each individual Sephirah: its name, the meaning of the name in English, its divine Hebrew name, archangel, choir of angels, elemental correspondence, planetary correspondence, colors, additional symbols, associated gods, etc.

Remove the twenty-two tarot trumps from the deck and put the rest of the deck aside. Take twenty-two of the note cards and write down information about each individual path that connects the spheres on the Tree of Life: its corresponding Hebrew letter, astrological or elemental attribution, divine name, tarot trump, colors, mythological summary of the path, symbols, associated gods, etc.

First Month

The first month should be spent performing basic relaxation exercises and preliminary rituals on a daily basis.

First week: Practice the mantra "**Kether, Malkuth.**" Using the note cards, commit the correspondences of the Supernal triad (Kether, Chokmah, and Binah) to memory.

Second week: Practice the mantra "**Yod Heh Vav Heh, Adonai.**" Using the note cards, commit the correspondences of the second triad (Chesed, Geburah, and Tiphareth) to memory.

Third week: Practice the mantra "**Ve-Geburah, Ve-Gedulah.**" Using the note cards, commit the correspondences of the lower quaternary (Netzach, Hod, Yesod, and Malkuth) to memory.

Fourth week: Choose a magical motto in Hebrew. Create and practice your own personal Qabalistic mantra from the motto you have chosen.

Remaining Eight Months: After the first month of preparatory exercises, the student should be ready to perform the pathworkings given in the following chapters. One pathworking should be

performed per week. This will allow the student time to fully absorb the energies of the pathworking anfi examine or deal with any repressed psychic material that surfaces to the conscious mind. The paths are worked from the bottom of the Tree upward, ascending from Malkuth to Kether. The information on the note cards and the tarot trumps should be put to memory in the six days prior to the actual pathworking.

The daily affirmations given below should be meditated on daily and frequently—one affirmation for each week of the thirty-two week period in which the thirty-two paths are worked. At this time, the student may begin "The Middle Pillar Exercise" and "The Middle Pillar Exercise on the Parts of the Soul."

Affirmations

MALKUTH: **I** am made in the image of the divine. ***32nd Path of*** ת: I am the end and 1 am just beginning.

YESOD*:* I will uphold the universe.
31st Path of ש The divine flame burns within my soul.
30th Path of ר My thoughts are focused on the awareness of God.
HOD: **I** seek to know.
29th Path o f : ק I will evolve to become a worthy vessel of God. ***28th Path of*** צ**:** Meditation brings clarity.
27th Path of פ The Word of God will sustain me.

NETZACH*:* All adorations to God are my Songs.
26th Path of ע**: I** will distinguish between truth and illusion. ***25th Path of*** ס I will overcome all adversities.
24th Path of נ*:* Change brings growth.

TIPHARETH*:* Balance is the key.
23rd Path of מ*:* 1 am willing to make sacrifices for what 1 believe in. ***22nd Path of*** ל:1 will strive to be just and fair.

GEBURAH: Through the strength of God I shall prevail.
21st Path of כ Perseverance in the Great Work will be rewarded. ***20th Path*** *of* י :The path of the mystic is lonely, but God will provide. ***19th Path*** *of* ט: The union of opposites powers the universe.

CHESED: The first duty of a king is to serve.
18th Path of ח: The spirit of God dwells within me.
17th Path of ז: Separateness is an illusion.

BINAH: There is truth in silence.
16th Path of ו: The Higher Self is the great initiator.
15th Path of ה The divine energy brings growth, light, and order.
14th Path of ד Love and awareness provide a door to initiation.

CHOKMAH: Wisdom is a gift given to the wise.
13th Path of ג: *A* unified consciousness reflects the purity of God.
12th Path of ב*:* Those who dwell in the house of God see with clarity.
11th Path of א: God's thoughts shine with perfection.

KETHER: There is no part of me that is not

of God.

Endnotes

1. Westcott, *An Introduction to the Study of the Kabbalah, 47*
2. Hartmann, *23.*
3. The "ch" should be pronounced like the "ch" in "loch," the Scottish word for lake.
4. See the previous endnote.
5. Israel Regardie gave the wording of this sentence as *Achad Raysheethoh; Achad Resh Yechidathoh; Temurathoh Achod.*
6. The value of Mem Final is *600.*
7. The traditional Qameas have come down to us through the writings of magicians such as Trithemius and Agrippa, but they are derived from much earlier and unknown sources.
8. The Qameas of the seven planets can be found in our *Self-Initiation into the Golden Dawn Tradition, 380-386.*
9. Regardie, *The Golden Dawn, 456.*
10. Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 463-464.
11. There is a "secret name" for each of the four worlds. According to Mathers, these names operate together with the Sephiroth through the "231 gates,"as the various combinations of the alphabet are called. These four names can be found in the *Zohar.* (See Mathers, *The Kabbalah Unveiled, 32, 73-74, 78-79.)*
12. Forrest, *The Rhodostauroticon: The Angels & Spirits of the Hermetic Qabalah of the Golden Dawn, 5.*

CHAPTER TEN

THE LOWER REALMS OF THE TREE

Many Qabalistic texts present the Sephiroth and their connecting Navitoth in their usual descending order from the first sphere to the thirty-second path. However, the student who explores the Tree in order to gain practical experience must begin with the Sephirah that is closest to our realm of existence in the material universe—Malkuth. From here the student ascends the Tree from the lowest to the highest, following the ascending path of the Serpent of Wisdom.

Malkuth

Malkuth, the tenth and final Sephirah, is the most dense and material of all the spheres. It is known as "the Kingdom," because it alludes to the physical universe in which we humans exist. It is the closest sphere to our normal waking consciousness. Malkuth is the corporeal cosmos as we know it—it is the earth, the air, the ocean, and the solar system. It is the divine clothed in matter—it is granite, wood, sand, and flesh. This is the level of divinity that has the most immediate influence on our material world and physical circumstances. The planet earth is assigned to this sphere.

According to the *Sepher Yetzirah:*

> *The Tenth Path is the Resplendent Intelligence, so called because it is exalted aboye every head, and sits on the throne of Binah. It illuminates the splendor of all the Lights, and causes an influence to emanate from the Prince of Countenances, the Angel of Kether.*

The title "Resplendent Intelligence" implies a close relationship between Malkuth and Kether, the first and last spheres of the Tree. At this point the emanations are completed and the result is the brilliance of the unified Tree of Life. Malkuth now becomes Kether of another Tree on another level. The mention of the throne of Binah implies another close relationship—Binah, the great mother, is the primordial giver of form, while Malkuth, the lesser mother, is the final giver of form.

Malkuth is the only sphere that has achieved stability and inertia (a period of rest). It is also the only sphere which is not a part of a triad. The tenth and final sphere receives the etheric framework of manifestation (the influences from Yesod) and completes the building process by grounding the energy in matter. Malkuth is the container for the emanations of the other vine Sephiroth.

Another title of this sphere is "the gate," which implies that we as physical beings live out our entire lives in the realm of Malkuth, only to pass through the gate upon leaving our bodies behind.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO MALKUTH

Summary: In this pathworking, the student enters the astral temple of Malkuth, meets the archangel Sandalphon, and has a vision of the Flaming Sword of the Qabalah and the two mighty Kerubs of the Tree of Life, Sandalphon and Metatron. Then he encounters the archangels of the four elements that comprise the four sub-quarters of Malkuth. *Path emblem:* The equal-armed cross + .

In your mind's eye, you see yourself facing the gate to the astral temple of Malkuth. A large door is in front of you. The door is divided into four colors: citrine, olive, russet, and black. The colors form triangles which come together in the center of the door.

Carved into this portal is the letter Mem], the initial letter of Malkuth, painted in white. Astrally, you give the Projection Sign and then step through the door into the temple of Malkuth. Once on the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.[1]

The temple is a great ten-sided chamber with walls built from heavy, brown earthen bricks. The floor is divided into black and white tiles. Enormous oak columns encircled with thick vines support a ceiling of pure rock crystal. In the southern side of the temple is a great roaring hearth. Embedded in the western wall is a blue mosaic relief of an eagle. The mouth of the bird forms a spout from which water gushes into a basin at the bottom of the mosaic. To the north is a large, round, gray millstone used for grinding grain. In the east is a great brazier of incense made of gold. The scent of Dittany fills the air.

In the middle of the chamber stands a black altar carved out of solid oak. It is covered by a cloth which is divided, like the door leading to the temple, into the colors of citrine, olive, russet, and black. The center of the altar cloth is white, and on it is a bright burning flame.

Drawing nearer to the light, you intone the divine name of this temple, *Adonai Ha-Aretz.* The flame burns brilliantly as you do so. Next, you intone the name of the archangel who governs the forces of this sphere, *Sandalphon.* Then you vibrate the name of the angelic order who operate in Malkuth, the *Ashim,* the "Souls of Fire," who are the essence of the sacred temple flame. They are angels of adoration who dance like floating embers around the central altar fire. They are, in fact, the souls of human beings who are dedicated to the service of the Light.

Within the swirling clouds of incense in the east, a figure emerges. Appearing as a tall, feminine form in robes of citrine, olive, russet, and black is the archangel Sandalphon, with dark hair and compassionate brown eyes. Instinctively, you give the Sign of the Enterer. Sandalphon answers with the Sign of Silence.

She speaks: "You have entered the Realm of the Resplendent Intelligence. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By this symbol of the equal-armed cross." You hold up the cross.

You face the archangel across the light of the altar as she directs your attention to the temple flame burning radiantly in a bowl of crystal. "Prepare to Enter the Immeasurable Region," she tells you.

The temple around you seems to become transparent. It fades from view and is replaced by cloud and mist. Before you is an image of a great Flaming Sword, which is bent like a boli of lightning. Sandalphon emerges from the mist and stands to the left of the sword. This time she is clothed in dark robes, her great wings thrown back to form a halo of glory around her entire figure. Two rays of light emanate from the sides of her head, looking somewhat like the royal horns of a Babylonian crown. Another figure emerges standing to the right of the sword. It is a masculine figure with dark curly hair and a beard. His white robes are so brilliant it is hard to make out where the robes end and his glory begins. His wings are also thrown back in a halo, and his head is graced with the two horn-like rays of light.

Both figures stand on either side of the Flaming Sword, with their arms stretched out in the form of a Tau cross. Communicating without moving her lips, Sandalphon speaks to you in your mirad:

"And Tetragrammaton Elohim planted a garden eastward in Eden, and out of the ground made Tetragrammaton Elohim to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the Tree of Life also, in the midst of the Garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and of Evil. This is the Tree that has two paths, and it is the tenth Sephirah Malkuth, and it has about it seven columns, and the four splendors whirl about it as in the vision of the Mercabah of Ezekiel; and from Gedulah it derives an influx of Mercy, and from Geburah an influx of Severity, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and of Evil shall it be until it is united with the Supernals in Daath.

"But the Good which is under it is called the archangel Metatron, and the Evil is called Samael (consort of Lilith), and between these two contraries lies the straight and narrow way where the archangel Sandalphon keeps watch. The souls and the angels are aboye its branches, and the glippoth or demons dwell under its roots."[2]

Metatron speaks without moving: "Learn then to separate the pure from the impure and refine the gold of the Spirit from the Black Dragon, the corruptible body."

The two great archangels, Sandalphon and Metatron, cross their arms over their chests. In a flash of light they and the sword are gone. In their place is a great waterfall, the source of which stretches up to heaven itself. It terminates into four rivers, which flow off in the four cardinal directions. To your right is a river of fire. To your left is a river of water. Before you is a river of air. Behind you is a river of earth.

Michael,[3] the archangel of fire, emerges from the river of fire in the south. He is a brilliant, flaming, masculine figure, dark-haired, and dressed in red armor and green chain mail. A flowing red cloak hangs from his shoulders. His wings are feathered in red and tipped with green. He bears a sword, for he is a great warrior and a protector.

It seems strange how such a powerful figure can evoke feelings of awe and comfort at the same time. You ask to see the workings of elemental fire in the realm of Malkuth. Michael reaches under his cloak and pulls out a red fire triangle which he touches to your heart. A feeling of warmth begins to radiate through your chest. The archangel takes your hand and together you fly up to a high wooded mountaintop where a fierce thunderstorm is lashing the earth. The black storm clouds churn noisily against the night sky.

As you descend to the ground, a great cracking sound splits the air. A boli of lightning severs a large branch of an old oak tree in a blast of light and thunder. The charred end of the severed branch is still burning as Michael picks it up for you to examine. You gaze hito the fire, but its heat is intense, and you do not quite understand what the archangel wants you to do. "It's hot," you tell him.

"Look deeper," he replies. You gaze into the fire, not with your physical eyes, but with your inner vision. Your vision of the fire seems to "warp" as if the image of the fire was shifting dimension. The heat of the fire lessens—at least it doesn't seem to bother you anymore. You now see white flames, not red, and you realize that you are looking at fire on a microscopic, as well as microcosmic, level.

You can see that the physical source of fire is a rapid chemical change that releases heat, energy, and light that is accompanied by flame, and is the oxidation of a combustible substance. Yet you can

also see that the spiritual source of the chemical reaction taking place is a result of the workings of spiritual creatures known as salamanders, the elemental beings of fire. You see small dancing, flame-like creatures forming into "s" shapes and joining together to begin the process of combustion. As two salamanders twist together like serpents on the staff of Hermes, they produce a flaming spark. You also see one entity who is the leader of the others, a small, red-haired, human-like figure who sits cross-legged in the center of the flaming creatures. Michael tells you that this is Djinn, the king of the Salamanders.

The vision fades as you draw your consciousness out of the flaming branch. Michael points to an area of dense undergrowth next to the blasted oak tree. The lightning has set off a brush fire which has spread widely through the woods. You are dismayed at this destruction, but Michael tells you that this particular fire is beneficial to the forest, clearing old dead trees and brushwood so that new saplings have a chance to take root and grow. Your anxiety lessens as you realize that this purification will in the long run be good for the old forest.

You contemplate the heat within your own body and how your body works to change food into heat and energy.

Michael seems pleased with you. He takes your hand once more, and the two of you fly back to the junction of the four rivers.

As you set down on the ground, Gabriel/[4] the archangel of water, emerges from the river of water in the west. She is a flowing feminine figure with a full body and face, fair-haired, and dressed in robes of blue and orange, with an orange rope around her waist. Her wings shimmer like liquid glass, and she bears a large blue cup. She is very lovely and comforting to look at.

You ask her to show you the workings of elemental water in the realm of Malkuth. Gabriel reaches into the folds of her robe and pulls out a blue water triangle V. She touches it to your navel. A feeling of warmth begins to radiate there. The archangel takes your hand and together you fly over a vast ocean. Far below you are several dolphins breaking the surface of the waves in play. Farther ahead, you spot a pair of blue whales, truly giant creatures, blowing spray from their massive heads as they exhale. You and the

archangel pass over these peaceful creatures. At length you see small dots of land—islands of earth against the vast canvas of the sea. Gabriel sets you down on one of these small pockets of land.

In the center of the island is a small freshwater stream which flows out to the sea. Gabriel instructs you to cup your hands together, fill them with the fresh water, and observe. You do so.

"It's wet," you tell her.

"Look deeper," she replies.

You gaze into the water again, this time with your inner vision. Your image of the water seems to bubble and warp as if undergoing a dimensional shift. The bubbles disappear as you gaze finto the microcosmic level of water. Against the pure translucence of water, you see atoms of different chemical compoundsbonding together and forming molecules of new substances. But you also see tiny spiritual beings, tiny orange and blue eel-like creatures swimming in endless circles, penetrating the borders of each new molecule, even penetrating the bodies of microscopic animals and plants through osmosis. These are the Undines, the elemental beings of water, silently doing their divine work, passing information and consciousness from one molecule to the next, cycling energy patterns, causing ripples of manifestation, movement, and flow, and initiating the processes of purification. In the midst of these undulating creatures is one who has human features and bluish skin, looking somewhat like a water sprite from European folktales of long ago. Gabriel tells you that this is Nicksa, queen of the Undines.

The vision fades as you draw your consciousness out of the water in your cupped hands. Gabriel tells you to drink the water, and you do so, letting the cool liquid quench your thirst. You imagine the Undines moving within your blood, taking food to all the individual cells of your body and carrying away toxins. The thought of this process of purification leaves you feeling cleansed and refreshed.

You look up and see the tranquil features of Gabriel. She takes your hand once more, and the two of you fly back to the junction of the four rivers. As you set down on the ground, Raphael,[5] the archangel of air, emerges from the river of air in the east. He is a tall, ethereal figure, fair-haired and dressed in robes of yellow and violet. His pale yellow wings are diaphanous and transparent, like

the mist itself. He holds the Caduceus Wand of Hermes. Never have you seen a more regal-looking figure.

You ask him to show you the workings of elemental air in the realm of Malkuth. Raphael reaches into the folds of his robe and pulls out a yellow air triangle A. He touches it to the base of your throat. A feeling of warmth begins to radiate there. The archangel takes your hand and together you fly high aboye the clouds.

Soon you are soaring higher than even the birds dare to fly. The wind whips through your hair and clothes. You pass in and out of the clouds, feeling their cool moisture on your skin. You plunge toward the earth at break-neck speed, only to turn away at the last moment, climbing high into the stratosphere. Then Raphael takes you high aboye the mesosphere some fifty miles aboye the earth's surface. From here you can see whole land masses between the breaks in the clouds. Aboye you is the vastness of darkening space—the stars and the planets in their silent majesty. "What do you see below?" the archangel asks.

"Clouds," you answer.

"Look deeper," he replies.

You gaze into the atmosphere again, this time with your inner vision. Your vision of the earth's surface seems to warp and curve. You now see the patterns of air currents over the planet's exterior as if they were painted in different colors with an artist's brush. The shifting currents, the changes in wind speed and air temperature, the formation of thunderstorms, and whirling patterns of hurricanes are all visible to you. You can see how crucial the volatile element of air is to the earth's weather, and how it often works in tandem with the element of water. It wraps the earth in a protective blanket that makes life possible.

Raphael takes you down through the atmosphere, plummeting earthward. When you near the earth, he slows, and you gracefully touch down on the ground with barely any effort at all. Raphael gestures toward a grassy field surrounded by a grove of trees. With your inner vision, you see thousands of Sylphs—tiny spiritual beings with gossamer wings carrying lanterns. From a distance they resemble fireflies. The lanterns they bear are the containers of the life-giving spark that is carried by the air to all air-breathing

creatures. Even water creatures need this spark, obtaining it through gills or through skin. The element of fire also needs the life-giving air for combustion. A group of Sylphs flutter around one who is larger than the others, resembling an elf or pixie with the wings of a dragonfly. Raphael tells you that this is Paralda, king of the Sylphs.

As you stand there, you breathe in the Sylphs—their oxygen enters your lungs and is carried to all parts of your body. You feel the life-force in every cell.

Invigorated, you look up and see Raphael smiling down at you. He takes your hand once more, and the two of you fly back to the junction of the four rivers.

As you set down on the ground, Uriel, the archangel of earth, emerges from the river of earth in the north. Like a fairer version of Sandalphon, Uriel is also dressed in robes of citrine, olive, russet, and black. Her wings are black, tipped with white, and she holds stems of ripening wheat in her hands.

You ask her to show you the workings of elemental earth in the realm of Malkuth. Uriel reaches into the folds of her robe and pulls out a black earth triangle V. She touches it to your feet. A feeling of warmth begins to radiate there. The archangel takes your hand and together you fly over miles of mountainous terrain, flat grasslands, and lush rain forests.

Suddenly, Uriel plunges into the earth. Although you are startled, you are unharmed. The two of you burrow downward into the soil. Finally, you drop finto a cavern with an underground stream flowing through it that sparkles randomly with gemstones. The floor of the cave is alive with creatures, insects, and earthworms. Uriel kneels down to examine the ground. She tells you to do the same.

"What do you see?" she asks.

"Bugs and rocks," you answer.

"Look deeper," she replies. You gaze into the earth again, this time with your inner vision. Your image of the ground seems to bubble and distort. The distortions disappear as you gaze into the microcosmic level of earth. As you focus your vision into the black background of the soil, you see spiritual beings directing

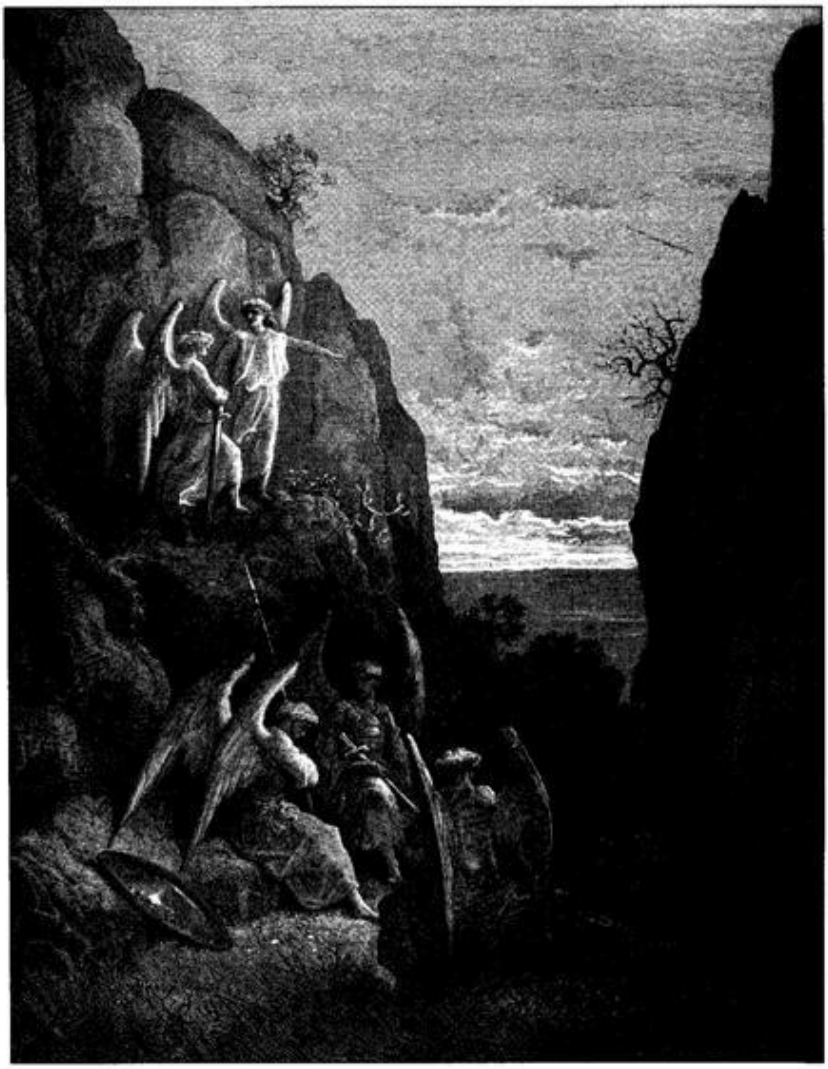


Figure 21: The Archangels

the movements of the insects. These entities are small black creatures of various description. They are the Gnomes. Some look like creatures of European folklore, but others look like black earthworms or amoebas with auras. Such a variety! Several of the creatures are performing different functions. Some are pressing dirt and minerals into gemstones. Some are creating pockets of metal ore. Some are directing earthworms to tunnel through the ground, aerating the soil. Some are releasing minerals from dead organic matter back into the soil. Such busy creatures for such a "static" element! One of the more classical-looking Gnomes, larger than most, stands in the midst of the others. Uriel tells you that this is Ghob, king of the Gnomes.

You reach down into the soil and find crystals of salt. You realize that your entire body is composed from the minerals of the earth. You and the earth are made of the same substance. Parts of you once existed in other creatures, in plants, and in the soil itself.

Uriel interrupts your contemplation. It is time to go back. The archangel takes your hand and pulls you up out of the earth. She flies you back to the junction of the four rivers.

The four archangels surround you once more, like ancient megaliths they tower over you. But they still have more to show you. With your inner vision, you see the planet earth suspended in the midst of the four archangels. You see what environmental imbalance and glippotic evil unleashed by humanity can do to the planet. You see a rain forest the size of the state of New Jersey burnt to the ground in a day. You see the burning of fossil fuels and the metric tons of pollution they throw into the air. And you see deadly toxins dumped into the planet's oceans and rivers, seeping into the ground water that we drink. You also see acres of wilderness areas bulldozed—replaced by buildings and parking lots. All of these events happen on a daily basis. This vision shows the material desires of humanity running amok and endangering the earth we live on. It is a sobering image, and you vow to use your powers of discrimination to help restore the earth's balance, in whatever manner you can. The archangels offer some final advice to you.

Raphael states: "Be prompt and active like the Sylphs, but avoid frivolity and caprice."

Michael advises: "Be energetic and strong like the Salamanders, but avoid irritability and ferocity."

Gabriel says: "Be flexible and attentive to image, like the Undines, but avoid idleness and changeability."

Uriel states: "Be laborious and patient like the Gnomes, but avoid grossness and avarice."

Sandalphon speaks to you: "So shall you gradually develop the powers of your soul, and fashion yourself to be a worthy vessel for the divine light."

The four archangels of the elements are gone in a flash of light. You are in the temple of Malkuth again, standing in front of the altar, across from Sandalphon. You Nave never left the temple in your pathworking. Sandalphon seems pleased with you. The halo of light that surrounds her at all times seems to glow even more brightly.

You thank Sandalphon for this, the first of many explorations of the Tree of Life. She graciously nods her head and fades from view. You turn and face the portal through which you first entered the temple. Giving the Projection Sign, you step through. Once on the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.



The Thirty-second Path of Tau

> *The Thirty-second Path is the Administrative Intelligence, and it is so called because it directs and associates the motions of the seven planets, directing all of them in their own proper courses.*

This "Administrative Intelligence" is a force that governs and "directs and associates" everything in the cosmos. The "seven planets" not only refer to celestial bodies of the greater universe, but also to the constituent parts of the lesser universe, the human psyche, which the Thirty-second Path directs "all of them in their own proper courses."

This path is the point at which students begin to explore the Tree of Life, as well as their own inner selves. The Thirty-second Path is a portal from the physical world (Malkuth) to the astral

plane (Yesod). As such, this path is also the first step to psychic and mystical awareness. Thus, we begin the journey in our physical forms, yet we turn our minds to the incorporeal worlds. On this path we must learn to accept the fact that the divine god-force is present in the physical environment just as much as it is in the celestial realms.

Traveling on this route has been likened to a journey through the underworld, which is symbolic of the subconscious. A pilgrimage through the underworld of one's own unconscious mind is a trek through a land full of shadows and ghosts of one's own making. These "personal phantoms" must be sufficiently dealt withassimilated or reconciled—before any spiritual progress is made.

The letter of this path, Tau, is the final letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The letters Aleph-Tau are symbolic of the beginning and the end, just as the letters "A to Z" or Alpha and Omega. Tau means "cross," an emblem used for marking, sealing, or signing as with a signature. The Path of Tau is therefore the beginning of a new spiritual type of existence, and the completion of an old mundane one. On the Tree of Life, the Thirty-second Path marks or seals the end of divine manifestation. For the student who ascends through the Path of Tau, it is a mark or seal of a new mystical life or viewpoint.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF TAU

Summary: In this pathworking, the student enters the astral temple of Malkuth and continues on the Thirty-second Path, where he accompanies the Babylonian goddess Ishtar on a journey into the underworld. *Path emblem:* A pantacle containing symbols of Saturn ♄ and earth ▽.

Behind the darkness of your closed eyelids, you begin to visualize the astral temple of the Sephirah Malkuth as the journey begins. From the complete blackness, a dim light appears, which permits you to take in your surroundings. You are in the midst of the temple of Malkuth: the earthen brick walls, ten in number, the ceiling of pure rock crystal supported by vine-encircled oak

columns, the black-and-white tiled floor, the sides of the central altar in the four Malkuth colors, the white top of the altar, and the crystal bowl holding the sacred temple flame.

Drawing nearer to the light, you intone the divine name of this place, *Adonai Ha-Aretz.* The altar flame fiares brightly. Then you intone the names of those entities who are at home in this temple: the mighty archangel *Sandalphon,* and the angelic host known as the *Ashim,* the Souls of Fire, who gather around all places of worship. The altar flame is illuminated by their dancing embers.

Within the swirling clouds of incense, a figure áppears in the east. Sandalphon, tall and dark-haired, appears in her robes of citrine, olive, russet, and black. She looks at you with compassionate brown eyes. You salute her with the Sign of the Enterer. She answers with the Sign of Silence. She speaks:

"You have entered the Immeasurable Region. This place is called *Thraa,* the Gate. It is the Gate of Justice, the Gate of Life, and the Gate of Death. The Gate of Tears, and the Gate of Prayer. It is the Gate of the Carden of Eden and the Gate of the Daughter of the Mighty Ones. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By this symbol of Saturn and the symbol of earth." You hold up the pantacle. "I seek the Path of Tau, the path of introspection."

Facing the archangel across the light of the altar, you prepare for your journey into the Thirty-second Path. Sandalphon turns toward the east where there is a great archway of indigo stones, bearing on its keystone the letter Tau 11 in brilliant white. Within the archway is a wooden door that had previously been obscured by the smoke from the incense. The tarot card of *The Universe* hangs like a veil in front of it. Sandalphon traces a cross in the air with her hand, and the veil parts. The archangel moves aside after showing the way. It is up to you to open the door. Undaunted, you approach it. Holding out the talisman of Saturn and earth, you trace with it a large letter Tau. The door slowly opens, and you enter the Path of Tau.

The sun is at its zenith as you step out into a lush, flat river val-ley. There is a mountain range barely visible, far to the north. Far to the south is a vast desert. But the valley you find yourself in is rich

from the silt deposited by the river. Close to the river there are tall grasses, five to six feet high, which ring low-lying, swampy areas. Away from the river there are other grasses, wheat and barley, which are native to this area. Man-made canals feed water to vast rich fields of grain. You are in the Fertile Crescent—the Land between the Two Rivers—the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia. The cradle of civilization. Before you lies the ancient city of Babylon.

In the east is a mighty temple, a ziggurat, having the form of a terraced pyramid. As you get closer you see a light falling from the sky. The light lands on the summit of the ziggurat and descends the steps that are carved into the front of the structure. As it descends it begins to take on a human shape. A feminine figure emerges from the light, walking down the steps of the temple. She bends back four sets of wings around herself; the wings transform into the shimmering folds of a golden robe. On her head is a headdress crowned with seven pairs of bulls' horns, a symbol of royalty. You see dark hair framing a full, olive-skinned face. Jewels of blue lapis adorn her clothing. As the figure reaches the bottom of the temple, you realize that it is the great goddess Ishtar who stands before you.

The radiance of this vision is overwhelming, but you soon realize that the goddess has come down from the heavens for a purpose. The goddess speaks:

"From the Great Above, 1 opened my ear to the Great Below. The husband of my sister has died. Gugalanna, the great Bull of Heaven,[6] husband of Ereshkigal, has been killed. The Bull of Heaven, who has propagated the stars, has died. I have come to witness the funeral rites. I have come to offer sacrifice and insure the fertility of the land. I go to the land of Aralu, the land of no-return, the abode of darkness, to the house whose enterer goes not forth, to the road whence the wayfarer never returns, to the house whose inhabitants see no light. I will go to the land of Aralu, to receive the knowledge of the Underworld."

The goddess fixes her eyes on you, questioning why you are here. You hold up the talisman of Saturn and earth. She shakes her head slightly, as if bemused by the bluster of a small child, and says, "So you wish to accompany me on this perilous journey? Are you certain?" You indicate that this is so.

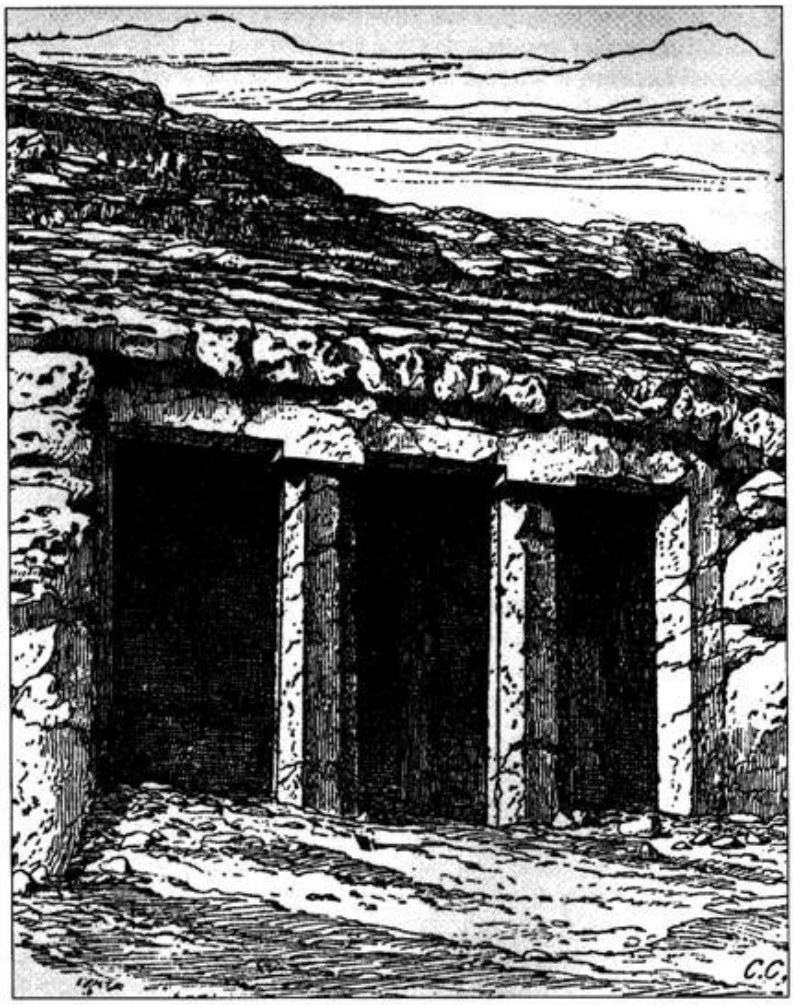


Figure 22: The Gateway to the Underworld

"Very well," Ishtar replies. "But remember that fear is failure. So be without fear. For those who tremble at the flame and at the flood and at the shadows of the air and the shades of dead shall never enter the palace of the stars."

The goddess takes your talisman finto her hand and holds it for a few moments against her breast. As she does so, you see a halo of light hovering around it. After charging it, she hands it back to you saying, "This talisman has been consecrated to the god Ea, lord of the earth and of the great waters. It will protect you on this journey."

The goddess takes your hand and soon you are airborne, flying eastward over walled cities, marshy rivers, and vast fields of grain. Soon you arrive at a great stone palace in the mountains of the Kur, the peaks of the Underworld. Two gigantic winged bulls with human heads are carved in the columns on either side of the entrance—silent stone sentinels brooding over the gateway to Aralu, the Underworld. The goddess approaches the gate and you follow, always a few steps behind. She is met by two guards who bar her way with drawn swords. "Who are you?" asks one of the sentinels.

"I am Ishtar, Queen of Heaven, on my way to the east. Gugalanna, the Bull of Heaven, has died, and I have come to witness the funeral rites. I seek the knowledge of the Underworld. And I seek to replenish the cup that is empty.1 seek the Waters of Life."

The guard takes no notice of you, for you are protected by the consecrated talisman that you bear.

Neti, the chief of the guards, replies, "Ereshkigal, Queen of Aralu, bids her sister to enter. But the Queen of Heaven must make a sacrifice at each gate. She must remove her royal garments. Let the holy priestess of Heaven enter with her head bowed low. The ways of the Underworld are perfect. They may not be questioned."

The goddess agrees, and as Neti unbolts the first gate, she removes her golden, horned crown and hands it to the second guard. Taking a lighted torch from the wall just inside the gate, Neti, the gatekeeper, leads Ishtar down a dark tunnel of descending steps. You follow them.

All of creation watches as Ishtar enters the gateway. All over the earth, fertility is suspended.

The light from outside soon fades as you descend deeper and deeper into the tunnel. Neti leads silently on as the darkness closes in. The goddess Ishtar follows resolutely behind him. The steps of the tunnel are rough, and you must feel the ground carefully with your feet to avoid stumbling.

Ahead is another gate, guarded by another armed sentinel. Neti tells Ishtar to remove her necklace of lapis beads. She does so and hands it to the sentinel, who unlocks the gate and moves aside. The three of you continue down an even darker and steeper tunnel.

The ceiling seems to press in on you. Although you- can't see it at times, you can feel it against the top of your head. The path twists from one side to the other. You begin to wonder if taking this journey was a such good idea.

A third gate is ahead, barred by another of the Underworld guardians. Ishtar is told to remove the double strand of lapis beads from her breast. She does so and hands it to the gatekeeper, who unbolts the gate and allows the three of you pass. You enter the blackness of an even darker and steeper tunnel.

You begin to lose your sense of direction, and you quicken your pace to catch up to the others so that you won't get hopelessly lost. The light from Neti's torch makes strange and sinister shadows appear on the tunnel walls.

A fourth gate is ahead, and another guardian bars the entrance. Ishtar is told to remove her golden breastplate. She does so and hands it to the sentinel, who opens the gate and permits you and your companions to enter. You descend into darkness and obscurity. The light from Neti's torch is the only thing that keeps you moving forward, more quickly now. You do not want to be left behind in this awful place.

An odd thing happens. Voices from your past begin to whisper to you. You can 't tell where they are coming from. The voices try to rattle your nerves. They taunt you by pointing out your weaknesses and limitations. They invoke memories of past events that you Nave tried to forget. They ridicule you for attempting this journey. They berate you for foolishly stirring things up. They implore you to be "sensible" and return to your normal, everyday life. "Go

home!" they cry. You clutch your protective talisman and try to ignore the voices.

Ahead, your companions have reached the fifth gate. You hurry to catch up to them. Neti tells Ishtar to remove her gold bracelets. She does so and hands them to the waiting guard. The gate is unlocked and the journey continues.

The voices assail you again, but the thought occurs to you that the voices are merely phantasms and echoes. They are archetypes that have entrenched themselves into comfortable niches within your own mind. They are established patterns and habits that do not wish to be disturbed or have their deceptions exposed. They do not want you to continue in this process of spiritual growth and risk upsetting their cherished positions of prominence within your psyche. But it is too late for their tricks. You are onto them now. You ignore the voices and press forward.

The sixth gate is ahead, and another guardian steps out from the shadows to bar the group's progress. Ishtar is told to hand over her lapis measuring rod and line. She gives it to the gatekeeper, who unfastens the door and permits you and your companions to pass. The blackness is so absolute that you wonder if you will ever see light again. The dark journey through the twisted rock seems to take forever.

At length you come to the seventh gate. Ishtar is asked to remove her golden robe and walk the rest of the way naked and humbled. Undaunted, the goddess hands her robe to the gatekeeper, and the small troop enters the final pathway into the Underworld. Surprisingly, the final descent is no longer as dark as it was previously. The tunnel eventually levels off and widens into a cavern illuminated by several torches. At one point you hear the dripping of water echoing through the chamber. The group crosses a stone bridge over a sluggish underground stream. A few steps more and you realize that you are in a great throne room in the heart of the Underworld, facing the goddess Ereshkigal, the terrible queen of the dead. Assembled around the goddess are her attendants, the spirits of the dead. Shadows of strange beasts move across the walls. Behind the throne of the dark goddess is an assembly of beings, the Annuna, the judges of the dead.

This goddess is frightful to look at. Her skin has taken on the pallor of a corpse. Her robes and hair are the color of dust. Her eyes hold the fury of an enraged beast. Seeing her sister, Ishtar, her lips turn black with rage.

"Why have you come to the mountains of Kur?" she asks. "Why have you come to my palace in Aralu? Do you wish to raise the dead? Would you deprive me of my servants? You already have the seven holy mé, the sacred knowledge of the universe. What do you want of me?"

"The Bull of Heaven has died. I wish to receive the mé of Aralu," the great goddess replies. "I desire the knowledge of the Underworld."

"So be it!" With a snarl, Ereshkigal strikes her sister dead and pins her to the wall. Her body hangs lifeless from a peg. Her body seems to shrivel before your eyes. Shocked and shaken, you grip the talisman tightly and close your eyes, wondering if you will meet the same fate. In that awful moment, you feel an upwelling of hate and other raw emotions. You hate Ereshkigal for what she has done.

But almost as suddenly, you hear Ishtar's voice in your mind: "Do not hate my sister. She is only fulfilling the cosmic law. I came to the Underworld of my own free will. Whenever knowledge or energy is exchanged, a sacrifice is called for. I came to receive the knowledge of this place. I came to behold my dark twin. I came to witness my own reflection. I came to face what most men run away from. Remember what I told you at the beginning of our journey."

You nod in recollection. "That fear is failure. So be without fear."

"That's right," the voice of the goddess continues. "I am not the first nor the last of the gods who will make this journey. Many mortals will do so as well. This is the way of things. Remember that day cannot exist without night, and life cannot exist without death. The whiteness of the heavens shines all the brighter for the blackness which is beneath. If you fear something, you only give it power over you. If you face something that you fear and recognize it for what is, you give it balance. You restore equilibrium."

Ishtar's words are comforting. An image flashes across your mind—you see the whole of Babylonia, the people in the walled cities, farmers and villagers, and even the plants and the animals

lamenting the loss of their goddess. No children are born, no animals conceived, and no plants develop fruit while she remains in Aralu. The servants petition the gods to interven. The great god, Ea, the lord of the earth and the Great Waters, hears their pleas. Ea, the magician, the god of light and wisdom, fashioned two creatures from dirt and gave them the Food of Life and Water of Life. He sends them swiftly into the Underworld with a mission. Your talisman, consecrated to Ea, begins to radiate with light.

You open your eyes and behold Ereshkigal writhing with pain. The two creatures sent by Ea comfort the dark goddess-in her suffering. Grateful, she promises to give the creatures anything they desire. They ask for the body of Ishtar, and Ereshkigal, no longer enraged, gives it to them. Ea's servants then sprinkle the food of life and the water of life on Ishtar's body.

Before your eyes, the color returns to Ishtar's cheeks. Her withered body inflates with life. The great goddess stretches as if waking up from a deep sleep. You are overjoyed to see her alive again. Taking her hand, you prepare to depart the land of the dead.

But as you both turn to leave, the Annuna, the judges of the dead, stop you. "No one ascends from the Underworld unmarked," they announce. "If Ishtar wishes to leave, she must pro-vide someonein her place."

The goddess responds, "Tammuz, my beloved, will take my place. Tammuz, the shepherd king, the god of vegetation. He will stay in the Underworld for half the year and the earth will be barren and cold. But he will return to the land of the living for half of the year. He will return to me in spring, and the earth will again become warm and bear fruit."

"So be it!" declare the assembly of judges. Ishtar and her party begin to leave. Before you follow her, you decide that it would be appropriate to offer something of yourself, as a type of sacrifice. The talisman in your hand radiates heat, as if agreeing with your decision. It has served its purpose here, so you decide to leave it in the palace of Aralu as an offering to Ereshkigal, who is one of the most maligned and misunderstood deities you have ever encountered. You place the talisman on an altar before the throne of the dark queen and thank her for granting you a glimpse of her Underworld

realm. The hard exterior of the cryptic goddess softens a bit. She appreciates your understanding.

A guard leads Ishtar and her small entourage up the dark passage back to the surface. At each of the seven gates, the goddess reinvests herself with her robes and regalia. By the time you reach the open sky, she has regained all of her former glory and seems taller and even more radiant than when you first looked on her. Her servants, who Nave been waiting faithfully by the Bate of the palace, rejoice at her appearance. Even the flowers and trees seem revitalized by her presence. .

The great goddess takes your hand and soon you are flying over the fields and cities of the Fertile Crescent. When the goddess sets you down again, you are standing before the ziggurat—the temple of the great goddess in the city of Babylon.

Your journey is at an end. Ishtar smiles at you fondly and brushes the fingers of her hand against your cheek. She thanks you for accompanying her and remaining faithfully at her side throughout her ordeal. You thank her as well, for she was not the only one transformed by the experience. The great goddess unfolds her four wings and ascends the steps of the ziggurat in a shaft of light. In a flash she is gone.

You turn to the west and retrace your steps across the valley. You return to the temple of Malkuth, and step through the portal.

The archangel Sandalphon seems relieved to see you. She seals the great wooden door behind you, and covers it with the veil of *The Universe* tarot card.

The flame on the central altar is a welcome sight after such an arduous adventure. The great fireplace, fountain, stone, censer, and oaken columns are a comforting sight. Standing before the altar, you partake of the sacred flame for a few moments before leaving the temple. Saying goodbye to Sandalphon, you salute her with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence. You leave the temple of Malkuth and reenter the terrestrial world.

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Yesod

Yesod is the ninth Sephirah and the sphere of the foundation. By "foundation" we mean the astral foundation or matrix on which all manifested forms in the physical universe are based and built on. It is the sphere of the astral plane and the level at which we build up images in the imagination. Yesod touches on the images and operations of the unconscious mind—those subconscious body functions that we are unaware of. The ninth sphere is also the realm of procreation, biology, intuition, rhythms, tides, and fluctuations. The moon, the ruler of the instinctive mirad, is attributed here.

According to the *Sepher Yetzirah:*

> *The Ninth Path is the Pure Intelligence, so called because it puri ies the Numerations, it proves and corrects the designing of their representation, and disposes their unity with which they are combined without diminution or division.*

The text states clearly that it is Yesod's duty to purify and correct the emanations. Although the divine emanations that flow down the Tree are intrinsically pure, they may ᵖeed to be proven or corrected in order to fit them into a vehicle of dense matter. Yesod also disposes or orders the unity of these emanations, so that only the most worthy manifested vehicles are designed for the reception of the divine energy, which is brought into the physical universe without becoming diminished in any way in its essential purity.

The spiritual experience of Yesod is the "Vision of the Machinery of the Universe." What this implies is that Yesod is the sphere of the astral light, also known as the *akasha.* This is the etheric substance which underlies all dense matter. It is the astral matrix on which the physical universe is built. Yesod is the receptacle of influences from all of the preceding Sephiroth—which are then combined into a type of blueprint made from the astral light. This blueprint is the "foundation" or etheric double on which the earthly plane is constructed. All events, whether natural or man-made, occur in the aethers of Yesod before they occur in the physical world. The ninth Sephirah is the last step that activates the final manifestation of form. In the same manner that all the planets were born out of the mind of God, all man-made inventions first appear

as ideas in the Yesodic part of the inventor's mind. Yesod is the lower seat of intuition in humankind.[7] In addition, all magical operations take place in the sphere of Yesod, because the magician seeks to effect changes in the physical world by manipulating the subtle currents of the astral.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO YESOD

Summary: The student travels from Malkuth to Yes id, where he encounters the archangel Gabriel and the four Kerubim who represent the four great formative energies of the Tetragrammaton. *Path emblem:* The ankh ?.

In your mind's eye, you see yourself facing the portal to the astral temple of Malkuth. The door is divided into the four colors of citrine, olive, russet, and black, and engraved with a white letter Mem, the initial letter of Malkuth. You give the Projection Sign and step through the door into the temple of Malkuth. Once on the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.

The familiar ten-sided chamber surrounds you—the floor of black and white tiles, the vine-covered oak columns, the ceiling of rock crystal, the roaring hearth in the south, the blue eagle mosaic fountain in the west, the silent gray stone in the north, the great brazier of incense in the east, and the central altar painted in the four Malkuth colors surmounted by white.

Drawing nearer to the flame atop the altar, you intone the names associated with this temple, *Adonai Ha-Aretz, Sandalphon,* and *Ashim.*

East of the altar, Sandalphon appears within the swirling clouds of incense. Tendrils of incense caress her multicolored robe. You salute the tall, radiant being with the Sign of the Enterer and she answers with the Sign of Silence. "By what symbol doest thou enter herein?" she asks. "What is it that you seek?"

You answer, holding the ankh: "By this symbol of Eternal Life, I seek the temple of Yesod, the temple of the Almighty Living God."

Sandalphon takes you to the east of the temple to where the tarot card of *The Universe* hangs over the door to the Path of Tau.

She traces the letter Tau on your forehead with her finger, and tells you that this will make your journey up the Path of Tau go more swiftly. You walk through the doorway, and pass quickly through a blue-violet tunnel with the starry heavens aboye you.

In the blink of an eye you are at the end of the indigo path of Tau, facing the Bate to the astral temple of Yesod. A large, violet door is in front of you. Carved into it is the letter Yod ', the initial letter of the name Yesod, painted in yellow. You give the Projection Sign and then step through the door into Yesod. Once on the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.

Nine walls form the temple's inner chamber, which is colored a rich violet. The figure of an enneangle, or nine-sided polygon, graces the floor. In each of the nine corners of the room, a brazier of incense hangs, scenting the room with the smell of jasmine. The ceiling is engraved with the various phases of the moon, inlaid with quartz and ebony. The central altar is cast in silver and covered with a velvet indigo cloth. On the altar, the temple flame burns brightly in a silver bowl supported by three crescents.

The feel of this temple is quite different from that of Malkuth. No sensations of security or solidity are evoked here. There is an ethereal quality to everything. You almost feel as if your hand would pass right through the altar if you tried to touch it. There is also a sense of excitement akin to sexual awareness, which causes the hairs on your arms to stand up. This temple is the dwelling place of the serpent power or kundalini. You can feel its power tingling certain nerves along your spine—stirred slightly by your entrance into Yesod.

With a sense of exhilaration, you vibrate the divine name of this sphere, *Shaddai El Chai. You* then call on the archangel *Gabriel* for guidance and the order of angels known as the *Kerubim.*

From the jasmine mists, the archangel emerges. Taking on a material form before you, Gabriel[8] is dressed in robes of violet trimmed with yellow. Her features are breathtaking—a fine ovalshaped face framed by dark brown, shoulder-length hair. Her green eyes are large and sensual and her wings are large, velvety, and violet. Somehow, you get the feeling that Gabriel could have

just as easily appeared as a beautiful young boy—emerging like a figure from a Renaissance painting. She speaks:

"Behold the Vision of the Machinery of the Universe. You have entered the Treasure House of Images and the sphere of Maya, or Illusion. By what symbol have you entered into the Mirror of the Cosmos?"

You answer: "By this symbol of the ankh, the symbol of Life." You hold up the ankh.

Facing the archangel across the light of the altar, she directs your attention to the temple flame burning brightly in a bowl of sil-ver. The temple around you seems to become transparent. It fades from view and is replaced by cloud and mist.

Within the mist you see the lightning-bolt image of the great Flaming Sword that was first revealed to you in the temple of Malkuth. Aboye it, you can just barely make out the lineal figure of a triangle, glowing dimly against the blackness which surrounds the vision. On either side of the Flaming Sword are a pair of Hebrew letters which taken all together form the narre Yod Heh Vav Heh (YHVH—יהוה) in flaming white light. Before your eyes, the letters transform into four mighty angelic figures, two on the right side and two on the left. All of the angels have four wings, two that stretch upward and two that stretch downward. Of the figures on the right, one has the head of a lion and the other the head of an eagle. The figures on the left have the heads of a man and a bull. Together, they form an impenetrable barrier—a wall of protection against evil and imbalance. Their outstretched arms are in the position of the Tau cross.

You hear the voice of Gabriel speaking to you: "And Tetra-grammaton placed Kerubim at the east of the Garden of Eden and a Flaming Sword which turned every way to keep the path of the Tree of Life, for He has created nature that humanity being cast out of Eden may not fall into the void. He has bound man with the stars as with a chain. He allures him with scattered fragments of the divine body in bird and beast and flower, and he laments over him in the wind and in the sea and in the birds. When the times are ended, He will call the Kerubim from the east of the Garden, and all shall be consumed and become infinite and holy."[9]

In unison the Kerubim cross their arras over their chests and assume the Sign of Osiris Slain. In a flash of light the vision is gone. In its place is a violet haze.

The haze that surrounds you is thick and viscous. You move through it easily but sluggishly, as if in slow motion. You begin to make out dark forros and shapes. As they draw near, they gradually become clearer before passing you by. You see people from your youth, long deceased. Some smile at you, while others seem to take no notice at all. You see houses that you once lived in, childhood pets that you once loved, toys, books, and óther objects that you once played with. You are surprised to recognize people and objects that were lost from your memory.

The memories stretch further and further back into the past, hito your early childhood. Soon they reach back to the moment of your birth and then, even earlier. The images now become archetypal memories that are buried deep within the psyche of every human being. You see great stone megaliths, chariots, long forgotten cities, battles, wooden ships, and enormous statues of gods you carinot quite recognize. Gradually these scenes also fade finto the violet veils.

A sudden flash of lightning vaporizes the thick mist. Before you stands the mighty lion-headed Kerub that you saw earlier. He is bare to the waist and wears a short Egyptian-style kilt. His thick mane frames a tawny feline face. His skin is the color of flame, and four brilliant white wings outline his magnificent body. Aboye his head is the Hebrew letter Yod surrounded by a golden halo. This is Aryeh, the great Kerub of fire. You ask the angel to explain the duties of the angelic host of Yesod.

Aryeh speaks: "The Kerubim are the vivified powers of the holy letters of Tetragrammaton. We are the creative powers of God expressed in the inner elements that exist prior to physical manifestation in Malkuth. We are the great formative energies that divide into the elements in the physical kingdom."

The Hebrew letter aboye his head glows brightly as he continues: "The letter Yod is the creative power behind the element of fire. It is the initiator, the sacred spark of aspiration, the genesis of life."

Aryeh extends his hand, and you see a red Yod ' in his palco. He places it just aboye your head where it remains, shining in your



Figure 23: Eagle-headed Kerub

aura. As he does so, an influx of divine energy courses through your sphere of sensation.

Another flash of light illuminates the violet clouds, and Aryeh is gone. In his place stands the powerful eagle-headed Kerub. You are not entirely certain if Aryeh has disappeared or if he simply transformed into another Kerub. He, too, has a human body and is bare to the waist. His eyes are fierce and penetrating. His skin is the color of clear blue water, and his four wings are completely extended. He is breathtaking to look at. Aboye his head is the Hebrew letter Heh in white brilliance. The great Kerub of water, Nesher, stands before you.

He speaks: "The Kerubim are the Strong Ones of Shaddai El Chai. We serve as guardians of the portals that exist between the worlds. We act as guides, heralds, and agents of equilibriation."

The Hebrew letter aboye his head radiates with light as he continues: "The letter Heh is the formative power behind the element of water. It is the Waters of Creation, the Well of Wisdom, and the consciousness of the divine."

Nesher extends his hand, and in it is a blue letter Heh. He places it just aboye your head where it joins the first letter, Yod. Instantly, you feel a connection with the greater consciousness of the universe. The two letters, Yod and Heh, turn white in color as they form the god-name *Yah* within your aura.

Nesher disappears in a lightning blast. The man-headed Kerub stands where Nesher once did. He is entirely human-looking except for the four white wings that grow out of his shoulders. He wears the same short kilt as the others did, and he looks like a Greek god. Over his head is the Hebrew letter Vav 1, surrounded by a glory of white light. This is Adam, the great Kerub of air.

He speaks: "The Kerubim are the living breath of YHVH. We direct the forces of Tetragrammaton downward from the invisible realms into the lower world of Malkuth. We operate through the fixed signs of the zodiac." The Hebrew letter aboye his head shimmers brightly as he continues: "The letter Vav is the volatile power behind the element of air. It is the completion of the triad, the Son, and the Reconciler. It is the great Mediator."

Adam holds a yellow letter Vav in the palm of his hand. He places it next to the other letters in your aura just aboye your head.

Like the two previous letters, the Vav also turns white. As he does so, you have an immediate sensation of mental clarity, as if pieces of a puzzle that have eluded you for years were suddenly falling into place.

A thunderclap announces the arrival of the fourth Kerub. The bull-headed figure appears where Adam last stood, emerging like the Cretan Minotaur from the violet mists of ancient Greece. He is an exquisite black-skinned figure in a short white kilt with four white wings that are flung back from powerful shoulder muscles. The Hebrew letter Heh Sophith t is positioned above his head. Shor, the great Kerub of earth, faces you. He speaks:

"The Kerubim are the vice-gerants over the astral elements. We are the builders who laid the Foundation of the Kingdom." The Hebrew letter crowning his head fiares with light as he continues: "The letter Heh Sophith is the stabilizing power behind the element of earth. It is the completion of the quaternary, the foundation stone."

Shor extends his hand, and in it is a black letter Heh. He places it just aboye your head next to the other three letters. The divine name YHVH is completed within your sphere of sensation as the final letter turns white. At once, you feel a rush of energy throughout all levels of your being—from the highest part of your soul to the cells and atoms in your physical body.

The Kerub of earth slowly fades from your view returning to the violet clouds. In his place is an image of an equal-armed cross, spinning on its central axis. Observing the cross, you hear the voice of Gabriel as she speaks to you:

"Behold, the synthesis of the Kerubim is found in the revolving cross, in the pentagram, and in the idea of one Spirit dominating the four elements."

The image of the cross begins to dissipate. As it does so, the faint figure of a pentagram hangs briefly in the air, then vanishes.

You find yourself in the temple of Yesod again, standing in front of the altar across from Gabriel, whose ethereal beauty puts you instantly at ease. She anoints you with a perfumed oil and gestures to a pair of violet leather sandals on the floor in front of the altar. She instructs you to wear these sandals on every path leading from the sphere of Yesod—that you may always tread on a firm

foundation in your astral journeys. You thank Gabriel, leader of the Kerubim, and you have a feeling that you will be working with the angels of Yesod many times in your magical work.

You quickly descend from Yesod, following the blue-violet Path of Tau back to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon graciously nods her head and fades from view. You turn and face the portal through which you first entered the temple. Giving the Projection Sign, you step through. Once on the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.



The Thirty-first Path of Shin

> *The Thirty-first Path is the Perpetual Intelligence; but why is it so called? Because it regulates the motions of the Sun and Moon in their proper order, each in an orbit convenient for it.*

The Thirty-first Path "regulates the motions of the sun and the moon"—luminaries which are analogous to the male and female polarities of energy. "Each in an orbit convenient for it" suggests that these energies are separated in an alchemical fashion in order that both may be systematically purified and recombined into a greater unity. That this path is known as the "Perpetual Intelligence" indicates that this is a continual process that requires constant attention and care.

This path links and harmonizes the corporeal energies of Malkuth with the intellectual powers of Hod. It is a connection between the body and the rational mind. This is the route taken by the lower personality as it struggles to become aware of its own internal mechanisms. While the student traveling this path advances ever nearer to the object of his desire, all imperfections are gradually incinerated by the purifying fire of Shin—the holy fire of the divine. Only the balanced and pure portions remain. The result is a type of resurrection or rebirth where the various parts of the lower personality are studied and appraised by the logical mind. This is a stage of psychic awareness where the normal waking consciousness begins to realize that it is not isolated from the spiritual energies that surround it. However, the student must constantly

determine what is rational versus what is instinctive, and be able to balance experience with logic.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF SHIN

Summary: The student travels from Malkuth and continues up the Path of Shin, where he finds himself received by the ancient Greeks as a candidate of the Samothracian Mysteries and where he experiences the energy of primordial fire. *Path emblem:* A triangular talisman containing symbols of fire and Spirit * .

Behind the darkness of your closed eyelids, you begin to visualize the astral temple of the Sephirah Malkuth as the journey begins. You give the Sign of the Enterer. Once again the ten-sided temple of Malkuth formulates around you with its black-and-white tiled floor and earthen walls. The sacred flame burns brightly on the central altar. The brazier of incense, fireplace, fountain, and millstone are familiar sights to you now.

You intone the narres *Adonai Ha-Aretz, Sandalphon,* and *Ashim.*

From the clouds of incense in the east, Sandalphon appears. You salute her with the Sign of the Enterer and she answers with the Sign of Silence. She speaks: "You have entered the Kingdom of Malkah, the Queen. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the symbol of fire and the symbol of Spirit." You hold up the talisman. "I seek the Path of Shin, the path of rebirth and initiation."

Sandalphon gives a nod of awareness. She speaks: "In the courtyard of the Hebrew Tabernacle of the Wilderness, there stood a fiery altar—the Altar of Burnt Offering—whereon was offered the sacrifices of animals, which symbolized the qlippoth or evil demons who inhabit the plan contiguous to and below the material universe. It is written: 'And when after all the phantoms have been banished, thou shalt see that holy and formless fire. That fire which darts and flashes through the hidden depths of the universe. Hear thou, the voice of fire!'"

Sandalphon leads you to the northeast where there is a great archway of flaming red stones, bearing on its keystone the letter Shin tU in brilliant white. Before the door is a veil made from the tarot trump of *Judgement.* The archangel traces a fire triangle 0 and the veil parts and vanishes. The door leading to the Thirty-first Path is carved from pure fire opal. You then hold out the talisman and trace with it the letter Shin. The door opens outward and you begin your journey.

You find yourself in a Greek temple. The great sanctuary is rectangular in shape, built from light gray limestone and surrounded on all sides by a Doric colonnade. The temple is dedicatecl to three gods known as *Kabiri* or the "Great Gods." Three stone altars are before you, each topped with a temple flame. They are each engraved with one of the narres of these gods: the "Great," the "Powerful," and the "Helpful." They are the fiery sons of Hephaestus, the god of the forge, and they are said to be sworn to the service of greater deities of earth such as Rhea and Demeter.

Turning, you walk to the entrance of the sanctuary. To your surprise, a red lion is resting in the middle of the entranceway. The lion yawns, exposing its teeth in cat fashion, and gets up, sauntering out into the courtyard. You follow the creature into the courtyard, but it has disappeared. Before you are two enormous bronze statues, one masculine and one feminine, representing the heavens and the earth. You pass beyond the courtyard and find yourself on a craggy mountaintop clearing that is dotted with olive trees. You are surrounded by a large gathering of people who are obviously celebrating some important event. It is mid-evening and the brisk, salty air tells you that the sea is not far off. Torches have been shoved finto the ground to provide illumination. One of the celebrants informs you that the festival is in its third day. The revelry has been continuous, yet the participants show no sign of fatigue. You inquire as to the nature of this celebration, and you are told that you are standing on the soil of the goddess Demeter's sacred grove on the island of Samothrace in the Aegean Sea. This is the site of the ancient mysteries of initiation, the oldest rites in all of Greece.

You ask to become a candidate in the mysteries. After some discussion with a few of the priests, your request is granted. Three men bring you a plain brown tunic to wear. It is the robe of a candidate,

and you are given the title of Kasmillos, the "attendant." You notice that others in the crowd also wear the robes of a candidate.

Purple-cloaked priests known as the *sai* seem almost possessed as they dance a kind of war dance, leaping in spirals and armed with shields and javelins. Warriors, sailors, shepherds, women, and even children take to the dance, stamping their bare feet in the soil of Demeter's sacred grove, carrying offerings of grain, bread, and wine to the goddess. Periodically, all participants shout the word "EUAH" in unison. The revelers whirl around the flagstone enclosure surrounding a large public hearth fire called *aM. stia.* Statues of the goddess Hestia flank the fireplace, while a few of the more brazen dancers leap over the open flame. Parched revelers drink from flasks of water and wine. You expected to see great tables of exotic food, but there is nothing to eat. All offerings of food are strictly for the goddess. The participants have been fasting for three days. The sounds of reed pipes, drums, chants, and cymbals raise to a deafening roar that continues well into dusk. It is a very noisy celebration.

With the full arrival of nightfall, the celebration turns more somber. Pine torches are passed out among the participants to be lighted from the hestia. Then, single file, the group proceeds up a well-worn hillside path. Past rocky outcroppings and stunted mountain trees, the procession eventually winds through the darkness to the rocky edge of a cliff, where the mouth of a large cavern is flanked by the carved images of two dogs holding great torches between their jacas. This is the Cave of Zerynthia—the Grotto of Hecate, the dark goddess of the moon and the underworld. One by one the celebrants file into the gaping mouth of the earth. With a slight feeling of *déjá vu* left over from a similar excursion on the Path of Tau, you follow into the dark passageway.

The tunnel leads downward. Torches lining the walls throw a reddish light into the chamber, and you are able to see fairly well. However, this path is stifling and hot. Steam rises up from cracks in the tunnel floor. It feels as though you are walking through the molten bowels of the earth. Acidic odors drift upward—lava and liquified iron. The atmosphere suddenly seems volatile and

explosive. Beneath your feet, the earth seems to rumble, groaning with pangs of volcanic pressure.

Your ears pick up the slow rhythmic sound of metal striking metal—a hammer pounding iron—and the hissing of steam as flaming hot metal meets water.

You find yourself in a great underground chamber with a high ceiling, surrounded by purple-clad *sai* priests bearing torches in one hand and javelins in the other. Gone is their former reverie. They are silent and still, caught in the seriousness of the moment. You notice other people who were formerly dressed as candidates—they are now dressed in the purple cloth of initiates. You are the final candidate for the mysteries this night.

In the center of the cavern is a great roaring flame. Huge braziers of fire cast thick clouds of intense into the stifling, hot air. Together the billowing smoke and the intense heat make you lightheaded. Sweat flows out of every pore.

A priest steps forward to face you. He is the *koies* priest—the Cleanser of Sins. He addresses you sternly and says: "Stoop not down into the darkly splendid world wherein continually lieth a faithless depth, and Hades wrapped in gloom, delighting in unintelligible images, precipitous, winding a black, ever-rolling Abyss, ever espousing a body unluminous, formless, and void."

The koies priest asks you to confess to whatever sins or injustices you have committed in the past—things that weigh heavily on your heart. Searching the innermost part of your soul, you focus on that offense you committed which troubles you the most. You are reluctant to do this, for it is difficult to admit your faults even to yourself, much less in front of the entire assembly of initiates. But you realize that it would be a catharsis—a healing experience—without which, no spiritual progress can be made. Swallowing your pride and holding out the talisman containing the symbols of fire and Spirit, you confess your greatest sin before the koies priest and the entire group.

The sai priests seem to fade from view as you begin to hallucinate from the lack of oxygen in the stuffy chamber. In the stifling mist you see the face of the red lion. This transforms into the brilliant figure of a pure white sphinx in the midst of a flaming whitehot glory. The creature addresses you in your mind:

"The sphinx of Egypt spake and said: 'I am the synthesis of the elemental forces. 1 am also the symbol of man. 1 am Life and I am Death. 1 am the Child of the Night of Time. I am the soul in twin aspect, united to the higher by purification, perfected by suffering, glorified through trial. I have come where the great gods are, through the power of the Mighty Name."[10]

Two priests come forward and grab you roughly by the arms, shoving you unceremoniously into the central flame. The heat of the fire envelopes you. Your clothing is incinerated and the hairs on your body singed. The talisman of fire and Spiri-t that you carry is utterly consumed. You feel intense pain as you endure this baptism of fire, but it is not an unbearable pain. Instead, you have a sense that all of your impurities—your body's toxins and your personal vices—are being burned away. Your sins are being purged from you. It is an exhilarating feeling.

You hear the voice of the sphinx as it speaks to you:

"All things which issue from the One—the Source of Sources-and conversely, go back to the One, are divided into many bodies. For not in matter did the Source of Fire, which is in the beyond, first enlose his power in acts, but in mind; for the framer of the fiery world is the mind of mind, who first sprang from mind, clothing the one fire with the other fire, binding them together. The second intellect is a skilled worker; he is the dispenser of life-giving fire that fills up the life-giving womb of Hecate and pours on the connectors a force of fruitful and very potent fire.

"From the Source of Sources, the birth of multicolored matter leaps forth. From there a lightning bolt, sweeping along, obscures the flower of fire as it leaps into the hollows of the worlds. Thence, a fiery whirlwind drawing down the brilliance of the flashing flame—penetrating the abysses of the universe; thence all things extend their wondrous rays downward.

"From him leap forth all relentless thunders and the lightning-receiving womb of the shining ray of Hecate, who is generated from the Father. From him leap the girdling flower of fire, and the powerful breath located beyond the fiery poles."[11]

The hands of the sai priests reach in through the flames to grasp you. Their sinewy arms pulí you out of the purifying flames. Steam

rolls off your bright red, naked skin. You are unsteady on your feet, but you are unharmed. The priests gently wrap you in the purple cloth of an initiate. They place a crown of olive twigs on your head.

Before you the vision of the sphinx continues as the creature again speaks:

"After the self-generated Source of Sources thought his works, he sowed the bond of love, heavy with fire, into all things, in order that the All might continue to love for an eternity.

"The soul, being a brilliant fire by the power of the Father, remains immortal and is the Mistress of Life. It fills up the many wombs of the world. The center of Hecate is borne in the midst of the Fathers. In the left flank of Hecate exists the source of virtue. Around the hollow of her right flank, a great stream of the primordially-generated soul gushes forth in abundance, totally ensouling light, fire, ether, and worlds.

"Since having filled all souls with a deep love, the Father mixed the spark of the soul with the harmonious qualities of intellect and divine will. To these he added a third—pure love—as the guide and holy bond of all things.

"Unwearied doth nature rule over the worlds and works. And aboye the shoulders of the great goddess is nature in her vastness exalted. Truly, Rhea is the source and stream of blessed intellectual realities. For she, first in power, receives the birth of all these in her inexpressible womb and pours forth this birth on the All as it runs its course."[12]

The vision of the white sphinx disappears. In its place is a vision of the burly smith god Hephaestus, standing over an anvil, pounding red-hot metal with a hammer. Behind the god is the forge of the holy fire, the ever-burning flame. The piece of hot metal Hephaestus is working on seems to be triangular. The god holds the metal on the anvil with iron tongs. The sweat of the god forms fiery droplets at his brow, which fall on the hot metal and evaporate with a hiss. The air is stuffy and humid with steam. Sparks fly whenever hammer hits metal.

Your head begins to clear as the vision of the god fades. Before you is the koies priest. In the palm of his hand he holds a triangle made of iron, like the one forged by Hephaestus. Before your eyes



Figure 24: The God Hephaestus at His Forge

the metal triangle becomes a white-hot flame. The koies priest holds the tongue of fire against your chest and the flame is absorbed into your heart. A feeling of warmth radiates from your chest to every part of your body. The priest explains:

"This is the sacred fire that was stolen from the forges of the god Hephaestus by the Titan Prometheus, whose name means 'forethought.' Prometheus hid a brand of the eternal flame in a hollow stalk and carried it back to the world of humankind."

(For an instant you have a vision of a flaming meteorite streaking across the sky as it falls to earth.)

"He did this so that humankind could develop the arts of civilization. But his act of kindness toward humans and his consequential sacrifice resulted in something far more important. For this flowering flame that burns in your heart is the sacred firethe spiritual will in humanity that brings us closer to that which is divine. May the flower of fire keep you pure and ever consecrated to the highest. Through it, may you pledge always to act virtuously. May it protect you from all evil and imbalance."

The sai priests stamp their feet, raise their javelins, and shout "EUAH" to end the ceremony. You are quickly ushered to the surface and back to the grove of the goddess Demeter, where a banquet awaits the hungry ritual-goers. You thank many of the participants in the ceremony, but they merely smile, shake their heads, and give the Sign of Silence.

You are elated by this adventure—changed forever by the experience. You feel connected to something greater than yourself. From this day forward, you pledge yourself to the service of the Path of Light. You will always strive to become more than human and rise aboye the ashes of your old self. After a few moments of contemplation, you turn to leave.

The journey back is swift. Soon, you are at the wooden door at the temple of Malkuth. Once inside, Sandalphon seals the portal and covers it with the veil of the tarot card of Judgment.

Standing at the altar flame, you feel totally rejuvenated. In fact you feel so strengthened that you are quite willing to rush head-long onto the Thirtieth Path. Sandalphon persuades you otherwise. Bidding her farewell, you salute with the Projection Sign. She in turn gives the Sign of Silence. You leave the temple of Malkuth and reenter the physical world.



The Thirtieth Path of Resh

> *The Thirtieth Path is the Collecting Intelligence, and is so called because Astrologers deduce from it the judgment of the stars and celestial signs, and the perfections of their science, according to the rules of the motions of the stars.*

The "Collecting Intelligence" implies accumulation, increase, and growth. The Hebrew letter Resh is attributed to the sun and the "head," which suggests both cosmic and human consciousness. This is, therefore, a path of increasing levels of consciousness where all forms of consciousness are collected, integrated, and appropriated for a divine purpose. Here are established the laws that rule

our notions of reality. "The judgment of the stars and celestial signs, and the perfections of their science, according to the rules of the motions of the stars" indicates the precise structure and operation of cosmic law that rules and regulates all things in the universe. Therefore the evolution (increase) of human consciousness acts "according to the rules" of cosmic or eternal consciousness.

The Thirtieth Path leads from the astral, imaginative world in Yesod to the sphere of the rational mind in Hod. It is therefore a conduit of the thought process or intellectual energy which further refines the lower personality of the student. The_Qath of Resh is a balance between the imagination and the intellect. But here our consciousness turns inward for guidance and support. Here we endeavor to harvest true inner sight, purged from all psychological obstacles that stand in the way of growth. A sense of regeneration or rejuvenation is the gift that the divine consciousness bestows on this path.

Since the Hebrew letter Resh means "head," it further alludes to the function of the "Collecting Intelligence," assembling information and experiences which the personality can use in its quest for something higher. This is the place where mind and body, as well as logic and intuition, must be balanced. The physical must be reconciled with the mental, and this process is aided by the intervention of the divine mind, sought from within. The Thirtieth Path is also where the initial communication with the so-called Illuminated Masters or Inner Planes Contacts takes place.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF RESH

Summary: The student travels from Malkuth to Yesod and continues up the Path of Resh, where he finds himself in an Egyptian temple of the sun god Re[13] in the city of Heliopolis. *Path emblem: A* lamen[14] on which is a Hexagram

Behind the darkness of your closed eyelids, you begin to visualize the astral temple of the Sephirah Malkuth as the journey begins.

You give the Projection Sign and the now familiar temple of Malkuth forms around you. The central flame burns brightly with a renewed vigor on the central altar. You give the Sign of Silence. As before, you intone the names that call forth the inhabitants of this temple: *Adonai Ha-Aretz, Sandalphon,* and *Ashim.* Sandalphon appears as in your previous journeys, and you exchange the usual greetings.

Around your neck you wear a lamen engraved with the symbol of a Hexagram. You hold up the symbol for the archangel to see. She takes you swiftly through the portal of Tau, directly in theeast of the temple. Within a short time you are at the entrance to the temple of Yesod. You enter without Sandalphon, giving the Projection Sign. When fully within the temple, you give the Sign of Silence.

You call forth the divine names and spiritual inhabitants of this temple: *Shaddai El Chai, Gabriel,* and *Kerubim.* The beautiful archangel Gabriel formulates in the jasmine mists.

"You have entered the realm of the Pure Intelligence. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?" she inquires.

You answer: "By this lamen of the Hexagram." You point to the symbol on your chest.

Satisfied, Gabriel takes you to the central altar where she anoints you with a perfumed oil. The violet leather sandals are on the floor in front of the altar, right where you last saw them. You put the sandals on your feet and marvel at their velvety softness. The archangel then takes you to an orange archway in the northeast. On the keystone of the arch is the letter Resh 1 in brilliant white. Within the archway is a veil on which is depicted the tarot card of *The Sun.* She traces the sigil of Sol ☉, and the veil parts, revealing a door carved from pure golden crysoleth. Stepping forward, you take the Hexagram lamen from around your neck and trace with it the letter Resh. The door opens and you start out on the Thirtieth Path.

You find yourself walking along a road beside a wide river. It is early in the crisp, pre-dawn hours of the day. It is dark, and you can only see the road before you because of a glowing light thrown off by the Hexagram lamen you wear. You are thankful that the terrain is flat and the road well paved. You have no desire to stumble in the darkness.

Ahead, a flickering light beckons with the promise of warmth and companionship. Drawing closer, you discover that the light illuminates two enormous limestone pillars whose summits are lost in the darkness. It is the entrance to a great temple. You follow the light into the antechamber, marveling at the hieroglyphs that adorn the temple columns. Your ears pick up the low rhythmic sounds of chanting.

Before long, you find yourself in the main chamber of the temple. Several priests with shaven heads wearing white linen tunics kneel in supplication around a large golden disk suspended in the air in the middle of the room. It is an amazing sight. -The light that brought you to this place and which fills the temple with its brilliance is an ever-burning flame aboye the floating golden disk. Behind the gravity-defying disk is a colossal statue of a seated figure. Incense wafts slowly upward from three large braziers at the foot of the sculpture. The head of the figure is that of a hawk surmounted by a golden solar disk which almost touches the ceiling. The right hand of the, figure grasps the ankh, the emblem of life, while the left hand grasps a waas or Phoenix wand.

The chanting of the priests increases in volume. Mesmerized, you listen to their earnest hymn of praise:

"Awake in peace, thou Cleansed One, in peace! Awake in peace, thou eastern Re, in peace! Awake in peace, thou eastern soul, in peace! Awake in peace, Re, in peace! Thou sleepest in the bark of the evening. Thou awakest in the bark of the morning. For thou art he that overlooketh the gods. There is no god that overlooketh thee!"

The eyes of the hawk are inlaid with rubies that reflect the flickering of the temple flame. They seem to sparkle with a life of their own. From the entrance of the temple in the east, you detect a subtle change in the atmosphere. A slight glow from outside begins to filter through the darkness. The chanting of the priests continues, and their hymns to the sun god become more intense.

"O thou Only One, thou Perfect One. O thou who art eternal. Who art never weak, whom no power can abase. O thou splendor of the noon-day sun. Over the things which appertain to thy sphere, none hath domination at all. And therefore we honor thee. O Divine One, self-created, self-anointed, thou art the lord of

heaven and earth, and didst create beings celestial and beings terrestrial. O thou heir of eternity, everlasting ruler, self-sustained, as thou risest thy gracious rays shine on all faces and abide in every heart. Live thou in us, as we shall live in Thee. O thou golden hawk of the sun!"[15]

Moving to the entrance of the temple, you gaze out over the landscape. You witness the golden orb of the sun breaking over the low-rising hills east of the city of Heliopolis and you imagine that you hear a collective sigh of relief from all living creatures. Gods and humans alike rejoice at the daily rising of the sun. Once again the sun god, Re, has overcome his enemies, the Apep serpent, and the forces of evil. Once again the life-giving light of the sun vanquishes the shadows of darkness.

The orb of the sun clears the hills and the full glory of Re is witnessed. The morning rays wipe away any remaining chill from your body. Within the golden disk you can barely discern the outline of the god, throned and enshrined in his royal Matet boat. In the prow of the vessel, Thoth, the god of magic, sets the course for the sun's journey across the sky. He is accompanied by his counterpart, Maat, the goddess of truth, and the mighty god Horus, who acts as helmsman. The rays of light emanating from this magnificent vision are pulsating with holiness. For a moment you are blinded, and you shield your eyes with your hand.

A few moments pass until your sight returns. You have a vision of a hawk flying aboye you, gliding effortlessly in the rising thermal winds of the Nile delta. It speaks to you:

"By names and images are all powers awakened and reawakened. To name a thing is to know a thing. But there are lesser names and there are sacred names. Isis learned the true name of Lord Re and assumed his great powers. She became mighty among magicians. Seek your true name in the Book of Memories. Seek knowledge in the books of Hermes Trismegistos."

The vision of the hawk fades. To your surprise, you discover that you are lying flat on your back in the temple of Re, staring up at the statue of the solar god. It is noon. You are alone in the temple and you have no idea how long you have been lying there. The heat of the midday sun reaches into every corner and crevice of the

temple. Rising from the floor, you see a small altar that you hadn't noticed before, just in front of Re's stone feet. On the altar is a papyrus scroll, sealed with the wax imprint of an ibis, the emblem of Thoth. Remembering the hawk's advice, you break the wax seal
and open the scroll.

The papyrus seems to be blank, but as you look closer, hieroglyphs and other writings that you don't recognize take shape on the page in front of your eyes. They are indecipherable at first, so in a silent prayer to Re, you ask the sun god to illuminate the message and make its meaning clear to you. A deep `voice answers, and your true name is revealed to you. Although it sounds foreign at first, you recognize it on a subconscious level. You consider your true name for a few moments before returning to the papyrus. You notice that you are able to understand the meaning of the writings



Figure 25: The God Re

without understanding the symbols themselves. You read and hear the following words written in the book:

"I am Eternity, the creator of the millions. I extend everywhere, in accordance with what was to come finto existence. 1 know as the One, alone, majestic, the indwelling soul, the most potent of the gods. 1 am the scribeof the divine book which says what has been and affects what is yet to be."

Immediately after reading these words, a clarity—a new awareness—overcomes you. You are able to remember things in your life that had long been forgotten. You are able to catch glimpses of other lives from centuries ago. You even seem to faintly recall a time when the universe was very young.

This experience fills you with a calm sense of elation, as though you Nave found something that has been missing from your life for a very long time. The final image that you receive before closing the scroll is the symbol of the sun, a golden circle enclosing a single point. As you close the scroll, the knowledge you gained fades a bit from your conscious mind but remains safely stored in your unconscious.

After paying final respects to the sun god, you leave the temple of Re in the city of Heliopolis to begin your trek back home. The orb of the sun is just beginning its western descent.

Soon you are at the temple of Yesod where you return the violet sandals to the foot of the altar. The cool air of the astral temple is refreshing after a day in the Egyptian heat. The archangel Gabriel welcomes you with a knowing smile. She then guides you back to the temple of Malkuth and leaves you in the care of Sandalphon. The archangel of Malkuth closes the portal behind you and goes to the fountain in the west. She return with a chalice of water for you to drink from, and you suddenly realize how parched you are. Finally, bidding her farewell, you salute her with the Projection Sign. She in turn gives the Sign of Silence.



Hod

Hod is the eighth Sephirah and the sphere of "Splendor." The splendor of Hod is the glory of the divine intellect and the rational mind that is a gift to humanity from God. This is the level of waking consciousness and the logical, reasoning mind. Hod is where we learn and where we communicate with others, as well as with ourselves. The eighth sphere governs writing, trade, magic, travel, thought processes, the accumulation of knowledge, and the exchange of ideas. Mercury, the planet of- communication, is assigned to this Sephirah.

According to the *Sepher Yetzirah:*

> *The Eighth Path is called the Absolute or Perfect Intelligence, because it is the mean of the primordial, which has no root by which it can cleave, nor rest, except in the hidden places of Gedulah, Magnificence, from which emanates its own proper essence.*

It is the "Perfect Intelligence because it is the mean (median) of the primordial." This implies a position halfway between two extremes—force and form. Hod is also the seat of the intellect. To borrow the terms of astrology, this correlates to the idea of intellect being in the house of its "dignity"—a placement which is advantageous, or "perfect." Hod's root, from which it cannot be separated, is the watery sphere of Chesed, also called *Gedulah.*

Hod is a lower form of the energy found in Chesed, but mediated through Tiphareth. The energy of Hod is watery, feminine, and fluidic. Hod and Netzach cannot truly function properly without each other. The eighth sphere is where the emotions and instincts of Netzach take form and come into action. Intellect needs the balance of emotion to drive it, otherwise the words and science of Hod become mere rational labelings—dead and uninspired. Likewise, emotions need the discipline of intellect to stabilize and ground, to keep the dynamic energy from being squandered. Thus the relationship between Hod and Netzach is symbiotic. In terms of the individual, the two spheres must be in harmony and balance in order to maintain a healthy personality.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO HOD

Summary: The student travels from Malkuth to Yesod to Hod, where he encounters the archangel Michael and the angelic choir known as the Beni Elohim. He is granted a vision of the library of Thoth, known as the House of Life. He also witnesses the legend of the poisoning of Isis' child Horus by a scorpion, and his return to life by Thoth's words of magic. He is also granted a vision of the use and abuse of knowledge. *Path emblem:* The cartouche CJI.

Carrying in your hand the Egyptian cartouche or symbol of the royal ring, you enter the temple of Malkuth with the appropriate signs. Sandalphon takes you quickly up the Path of Tau to the temple of Yesod. In Yesod you greet Gabriel and put on the violet sandals. The archangel leads you quickly up the Path of Resh.

You see yourself standing at the end of the orange Path of Resh, facing the door to the water temple of Hod. A large, orange door is in front of you. Carved into this door is the letter Heh 1 painted in blue. You give the Projection Sign and step through the door into Hod. Once on the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.

The temple is an eight-sided chamber draped in curtains of orange silk. The floor is also colored orange. Embedded into the floor is a figure of an octagon constructed from fire opals. The scent of storax is in the air, and the orange ceiling is ornamented with a large blue sigil of the planet Mercury ☿, in the center of which is the image of a cup ☵. Eight marble columns surround the central blue altar, on which is a disk of opal containing the sacred temple flame, a chalice of water, and a book with the figure of an octagram gracing its cover. On closer inspection, you see one word written on the book—"KNOWLEDGE."

To announce your presence in the temple and call forth its inhabitants, you vibrate the divine name *Elohim Tzabaoth* and the name of the archangel *Michael. You* then call on the order of angels known as the *Beni Elohim.*

Almost immediately, a mighty and shining figure appears—a dark-complected being in robes of orange ornamented with a blue octagram on his breast. He has an angular face, piercing eyes, and a

robust, sinewy frame. Thrown back from his shoulders are two enormous wings coated in orange and blue feathers. He carries a book tucked under one arm. Michael, archangel of Hod, speaks to you:

"You Nave entered the realm of the Absolute or Perfect Intelligence. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By this symbol of the cartouche." You hold it up.

Michael responds: "The 'royal ring' of Egypt contained a god's name. It is a receptacle for god-names and words of power. It is a worthy symbol for the realm of the intellect and communication."

You face the archangel across the light of the altar. He directs your attention to the temple flame burning brightly on a disk of opal. Then he opens the Book of Knowledge lying on the altar. The temple around you suddenly seems to become transparent. It fades from view and is replaced by cloud and mist. Gradually you see before you what appears to be a dark and endless expanse of water. The vision is dim and murky, and the movement of the water seems like shadows shifting against other shadows. You hear Michael's voice aboye the roar of the sea:

"In the beginning was the Word, the Logos, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things carne into existence through God, and apart from God not even one thing carne into existence. What God caused to exist was life, and the life was the light of humanity. And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not."[16]

Aboye the image of the dark sea, you see a brilliant light like an atomic explosion lighting up the night sky. The sound is deafening, and you almost feel the earth quaking beneath your feet from the impact. All you see now is the divine white brilliance, which slowly settles into a rocky landscape against a clear blue sky. On a hilltop aboye, you see a fine of winged angels dressed in orange robes and holding staves. They are the Beni Elohim, the angel host of the sphere of Hod. Each angel is surrounded by a halo of blue light. This a sight that takes your breath away. Respectfully, you ask to know how the angels of Hod function in the eighth Sephirah.

One angel steps forward to address you. It is Michael in his guise as ruler of the Beni Elohim. He speaks:

"In legend, we are the children of the gods who were attracted to the daughters of man, who carne down from heaven to mingle with humanity, and teach humanity the arts and sciences. It is written: 'The sons of the gods saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose.'[17] The hidden meaning of this allegory points to our duty to interact with humanity on behalf of the divine. We impregnate the mirad of man with knowledge and consciousness. We teach the arts of communication and magic. We are the thought-forms of divine consciousness that are the immediate formers of human intelligence. We are the principies of 'god-awareness' in you."

Before your eyes, Michael changes his form. He transforms into the figure of an old grey-bearded Renaissance philosopher holding a lyre. The sight of his richly ornate apparel and broad-rimmed hat is mildly amusing. He looks for all the world like the artist Leonardo da Vinci. Michael explains:

"Hod is the sphere of images that are created by divine beings. These images are controlled by the mirad and the will. Meditation on these images will reveal sublime truths. These holy images include all god-forms—the personas and likenesses of gods, goddesses, heroes, and archetypes that are formulated in the intellect of Hod. These are the forms and faces that the divine chooses to reveal itself to you, transforming itself in ways that help facilitate your understanding."

Michael changes back to his original archangelic appearance. He holds out his hand, and as he does so, the cartouche symbol in your hand begins to vibrate and glow with light. Observing this strange phenomenon, you see hieroglyphs appearing in the center of the cartouche. The main symbol within the cartouche is that of an ibis. Michael tells you of its importance:

"This is the narre of Thoth, Djehuti. This is the god-form chosen by the divine to instruct you in the mysteries of Hod."

Michael, the line of angels, and the hill they stood on all fade from your view in a swirl of orange mist. You find yourself standing in a vast room filled with books. It is obviously a library of some kind, and there seems to be all manner of books, both modem

and ancient, lining the walls. There are hardcover books on shelves as well as papyri, which are kept in large clay jars. The concept of time seems irrelevant here. Egyptian scribes in simple linen kilts sit at long tables writing on sheets of papyrus. Next to them sit medieval monks in plain brown frocks painting ornate letters in large colorful manuscripts. On another table sits a man in a gray suit working intently on a lap-top computer. Sitting opposite him are two children speaking silently in American Sign Language.

At the far end of the room is a large throne with a seated figure. The occupant of the throne is very familiar to you—the ibis-headed god seems like the very essence of serenity as he overlooks his library, known as the House of Life. He wears the *Atef* crown, a tall headdress of double feathers resting on the horns of a ram. It is a fitting symbol of dominion for the god of science, writing, and magic—he who is master of time—a god whose titles include "The Lord of Holy Words," "Lord of Heaven," and "Thoth, three times very very great."

You humbly ask the god for some knowledge of the sphere of Hod. Thoth answers: "Humankind was made of Life and Light transformed into soul and mind. The wickedness of a soul is ignorance. The virtue of the soul is Knowledge. Knowledge is the gift of God; for all Knowledge is incorporeal, but uses the mind as an instrument, as the mind uses the body."[18]

Thoth passes the palm of his hand in front of your face from left to right. As he does so, the vision before you undulates like water that has been disturbed. The scene changes to a desert landscape. You now see the image of the great goddess Isis cradling the motionless body of a small child. Her sister Nephthys is weeping nearby. Both goddesses seem to be in a high state of distress. Scurrying away from the child is a black scorpion. The son of Isis has been stung and the deadly poison of the scorpion has rendered him unconscious. The lament of the goddess is painful to listen to:

"Stung is Horus, O Re, stung is thy son! Stung is this beautiful child of gold, the son of Un-nefer! Shall Horus live for his mother? 1 pray to heaven that the boat of the sun stop in its journey across the sky, until Horus be brought back to life!"

The cries of the two goddesses reach to the heavens, and even the mighty sun god Re stops the solar boat dead in the sky. Then Thoth, the thrice great god, descends from the heavens to aid Isis in her sorrow. Thoth appears, provided with his magic and possessing the words of power. He kneels over the lifeless body of the child. The god extends his hands over the dead Horus and intones a magical formula quietly in the Egyptian tongue. As he does so, you hear Michael's voice repeat the following words:

"The speech in the silence, the words against the Son of Night, the voice of Thoth before the universe in the presence of the eternal gods, the formulas of knowledge, the wisdom of breath, the radix of vibration, the shaking of the invisible, the rolling asunder of the darkness, the becoming visible of matter, the piercing of the coils of the stooping dragon, the breaking forth of the light, all these are in the knowledge of Thoth. At the ending of the night, at the limits of the light, Thoth stood before the Unborn Ones of Time! Then was formulated the universe, then came forth the gods thereof, the aeons of the bornless beyond, then was the voice vibrated, then was the name declared. At the threshold of the entrance, between the universe and the infinite, in the Sign of the Enterer, stood Thoth, as before him were the aeons proclaimed. In breath did he vibrate them, in symbols did he record them, for betwixt the light and the darkness did he stand."

Throughout the speech, you see a golden light flickering around Thoth's hands. The light spreads over the prone body of the young wounded god. Suddenly, the child takes a breath and opens his eyes. He calls out for his mother. Isis cries in delight and relief as her son Horus throws his arms around her. The goddess Nephthys praises Thoth in heartfelt gratitude:

"Thou lordly ibis, thou god, for whom yearneth Hermopolis. Let me tell of thy mighty works in whatever land I be. So will the multitude of men say: 'Great things are they that Thoth hath done.'

Suddenly several images cross your mind. You see an elderly man sitting next to a dialysis machine which filters his blood and allows him to survive chronic kidney disease. You see a young woman lying comfortably on an MRI table as her neck and back are magnetically scanned for injuries. You see people using sophisticated satellites and Doppler radar equipment to predict tornadoes

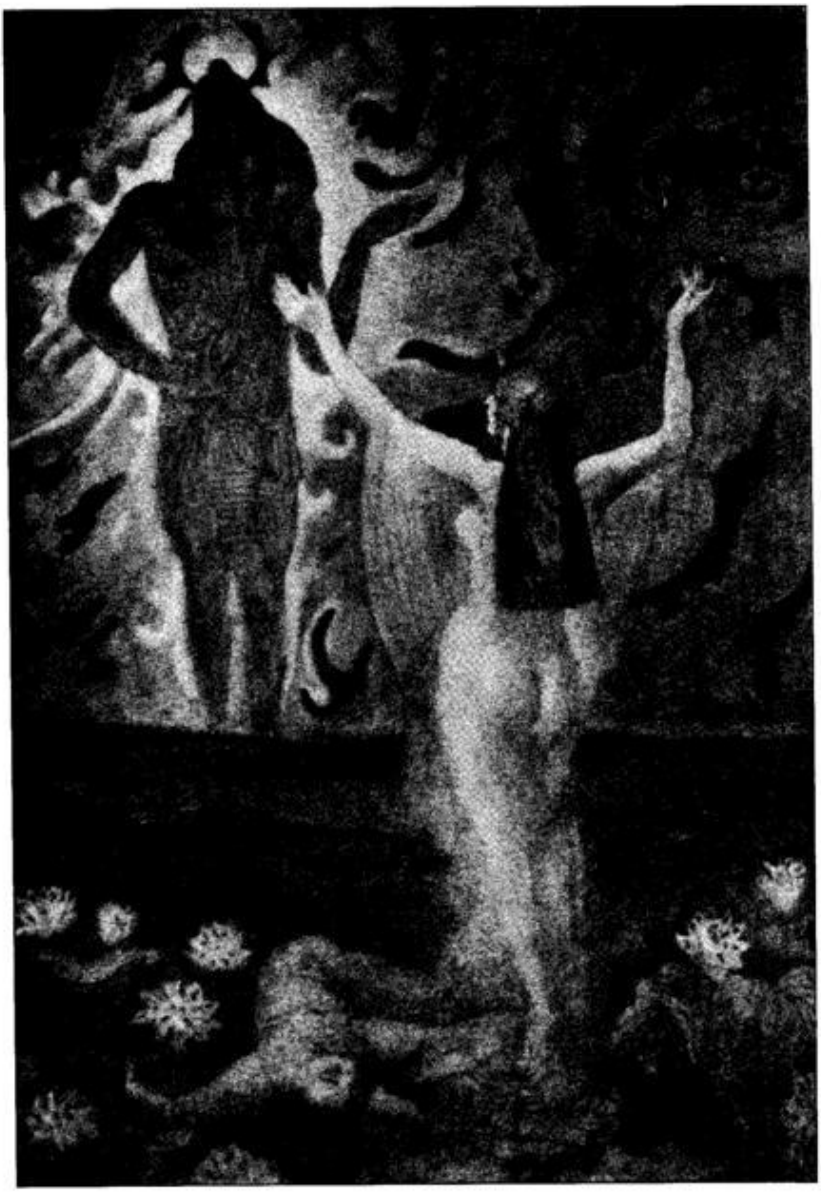


Figure 26: Isis, Re, and the Wounded Horus

and provide early storm warnings in order to save human lives. You see a myriad of inventions created over the years to improve the quality of human life, and you realize that all of these things are a result of the intellectual activities found in the Sephirah of Hod.

Thoth appears before you and speaks: "Knowledge used well, with divine intent and ethical understanding, can bring forth many wonders that aid humanity. However, knowledge used with an evil intent, or without ethical understanding, can bring forth many man-made horrors and afflictions to humankind.

"Years ago, a priest named Nefer-ka-Ptah desired to possess one of my most potent magical books for his own selfish pleasure. Through bribery he discovered where I had hidden my book, and through evil magic he killed the sacred serpent which guarded it. For this sacrilege against me, Nefer-ka-Ptah paid with his life. Yet the evil that accompanies the misuse of Knowledge continues to this day."

Once again Thoth passes the palm of his hand in front of you from left to right. As he does so, the vision before you quivers like an agitated pool of water. Several new images are presented to you. You see an entire rain forest cut down and burned for fuel. You see several acres of mountain wilderness strip-mined for coal—the land is completely devoid of life. You see a lake that is so polluted from industrial runoff that humans are advised to stay far away from it. You see a war plan raking a small village with cluster bombs that destroy everything in its path. You see guided missiles fired from a battleship to deliver their lethal payloads to a city hundreds of miles away. You see innumerable ways in which humans have abused knowledge, with devastating consequences to themselves and to the environment, and you realize that all of these things are a result of the abasement of Hod energies.

These terrible images fade from your view, and once again you are standing in the House of Life, the great library of books. The ibis-headed god looks at you with inscrutable black eyes. He addresses you once again on the nature of the mind:

"Mind is of the very substance of God, if indeed there is a substance of God; and of what nature that substance is, God alone knows precisely. There are two gifts which God has bestowed on man alone, and on no other mortal creature. These two are mind

and speech; and the gift of mind and speech is equivalent to that of immortality. If a man uses these two gifts rightly, he will differ in nothing from the immortals; or rather, he will differ from them only in this, that he is embodied upon earth; and when he quits the body, mind and speech will be his guides, and by them he will be brought into the troop of the gods and the souls that have attained bliss. Speech is an image of mind, and mind is an image of God. Use these gifts wisely."[19]

Gradually, the library and its inhabitants fade from your view. The image of the great god Thoth lingers for a brief moment, then it, too, vanishes in a flash of light.

You find yourself in the temple of Hod once again, standing in front of the altar across from Michael. Like your two previous Sephirotic experiences, the visions that were shown to you have occurred within the temple of Hod—you never left the sanctuary. Michael, archangel of Hod and leader of the Beni Elohim, gives you a few moments to get your bearings. Then he closes the Book of Knowledge lying on the altar. You thank the archangel for this glimpse of the mysteries of Hod.

Quickly, you descend the orange path of Resh from Hod to Yesod, where you briefly anoint yourself with oil and return the astral slippers. Descending the path of Tau, you find yourself in the temple of Malkuth in the company of Sandalphon. Turning to face the portal through which you first entered the temple, you give the Projection Sign and pass through it. One the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.



The Twenty-ninth Path of Qoph

> *The Twenty-ninth Path **is** the Corporeal Intelligence, so called because **it** forms every body which **is** formed in all the worlds, and the reproduction of them.*

The "Corporeal Intelligence" denotes that the Twenty-ninth Path is concerned with body consciousness and reproduction. The Hebrew letter Qoph means "back of the Head," and it is especially associated with those organs that control automatic motor functions and other involuntary or subconscious body functions. Qoph also suggests "sleep," another reference to the subconscious mirad. There is a clear sexual connotation here as well, for the passage indicates that this path plays a major role in the procreation of "every body."

The Twenty-ninth Path runs between Netzach, the seat of the emotions, and Malkuth, the sphere of the "body" whose life-functions are controlled by motor impulses. Thus, this path embodies the intuitive faculties that are a by-product of the unconscious. It is the great unknown, the deep dark well of the subconscious—a source of some of our greatest visions, as well as our most repressed fears. The subconscious mirad is a sanctuary where magicians and mystics can go periodically to withdraw from the outside world. To most people, this is a secret place that is only entered while asleep and in the dream-state, only to be forgotten on waking. But the magician can access this natural wellspring of inspiration and psychic fertility at any time through meditation and ritual work.

The Path of Qoph is one of cycles—of ebb and flow. It is also one of evolution where the student experiences various levels of psychic development and evolution. One of the lessons of this path is that the mirad and the body must work together for balance. The body is not to be looked on as simply the gross container for the spirit. Body and spirit are not enemies. Both are sacred and must work in harmony for true spiritual growth to occur.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF QOPH

Summary: From Malkuth the student journeys up the Path of Qoph where he encounters Oannes, the fish-god of wisdom, who teaches the ancient Babylonians about the birth of the universe and the evolution of civilization. The student later confronts an illusion. *Path emblem:* Symbol of Pisces)

The now familiar temple of Malkuth formulates around you. The central flame burns brightly with a renewed passion on the central altar.

As before, you intone the names which call forth the inhabitants of this temple: *Adonai Ha-Aretz, Sandalphon,* and *Ashim.* Sandalphon appears as in your previous journeys, and you exchange the usual signs. She asks "Why Nave you come to the bridal chamber of Kalah in the realm of the Active World?" This time you hold up the symbol of Pisces for the archangel to see. She leads you to a red-violet archway in the southeast of the temple. On the keystone of the arch is the letter Qoph j in brilliant white. Within the arch is a curtain on which is painted the tarot card of *The Moon.* Sandalphon traces the symbol of Pisces)f and the veil fades into mist. In its place is a door carved from Mother of Pearl on which is the Hebrew letter Qoph in red-violet. You hold out the symbol and trace the letter Qoph before the door, which dissolves. With firm resolve, you step out onto the Twentyninth Path.

You find yourself walking along a great, sandy river delta where the Tigris-Euphrates flows into the blue expanse of the Persian Gulf. The blue-green waters of the gulf gently caress the shoreline as the morning sun ascends just aboye the waters to the east. Two sea gulls swoop by your head, almost diving into the water, only to ascend the winds at the last moment, as they fight over some tasty morsel.

A commotion draws your attention away from the beauty of the landscape, where farther up the shore you see a raucous band of humans quarreling with each other. As you approach, you see that they are a primitive bunch, dressed in animal skins ornamented with claws, feathers, and bones. Their skin is very tan from long days

spent in the sun. You realize that you are witnessing a very early stage in humanity's development at the mouth of the Fertile Crescent. The humans appear to be fishing and gathering shellfish for food. Small children splash playfully at the water's edge, while a group of women on the beach use sharpened clam shells to cut pieces of fish into strips to be dried in the sun. The men are scattered farther out in the water and on the shore. One man, who has impaled a large fish with a wooden spear, is arguing loudly with another man in an apparent disagreement over possession of the prize. A shoving match ensues as other men arrive to take sides.

A shout of fear suddenly goes up, and the entire group stops to focus on the possible source of danger to the tribe. The men who had been fishing in deeper waters scurry ashore to avoid a large, dark, sinewy shape that slices shark-like toward the land. In a panic, the women drop their tools and grab the small children, scooping them up out of the shallow water and retreating to the safety of dry land. Once out of the water, the men regain their courage and stand at the shoreline with raised spears, ready to defend their tribe.

The source of the disturbance soon presents itself. The body of a large fish, its skin shimmering with iridescent scales, swims toward the group. About twenty feet from shore, the fish stops and stands erect like a human being. Beneath the underside of the fish, you see the body of a man joined to the creature. A serene, bearded human face is just below the fish's head. His arms and feet are joined to the fish's tail. The figure raises its arms in a gesture of peace, and immediately you notice a change in the attitude of the human tribe. The men pulí back their spears and kneel in the sand before the figure, who they seem to instinctively recognize as a god.

Oannes, the Babylonian god of Wisdom and Light, speaks in an ancient tongue that is not familiar to you, yet you seem to understand the meaning behind his words as he describes the generation of mankind. Oannes speaks:

"There was a time in which there existed nothing but darkness and an abyss of the waters, wherein resided the most hideous creatures, which were of a two-fold principie. These monstrous composite beings were presided over by Thalath, the dragon, the moon. Bel carne and cut the woman-creature asunder, and out of

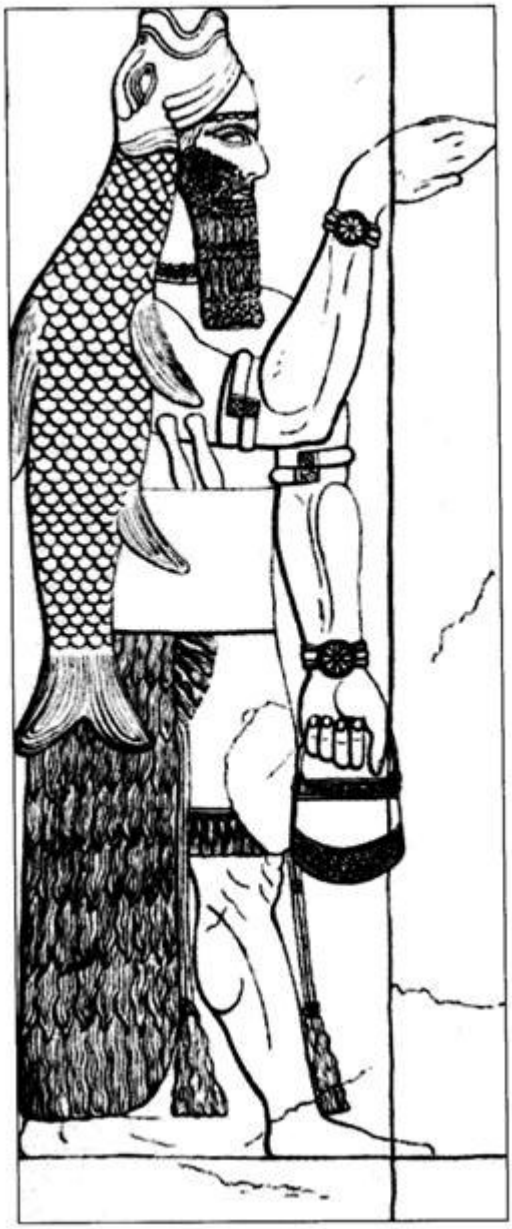


Figure 27: Oannes

one half he formed the earth, and of the other half he formed the heavens. At that same time he destroyed the animals in the abyss. Bel divided the darkness$_x$ separated the heavens from the earth, and reduced the universe to order. But the monstrous animals, not being able to bear the prevalence of the Light, died. The god Bel, seeing a vast space uninhabited, cut off his own head and mixed his blood with the soil of the earth. From the blood of the god mixed with the fruitful earth, other animals and men were born who were capable of bearing the light. Bel also formed the stars, the sun and moon, and the planets."[20]

You listen, mesmerized by the tale told by Oannes. You have a vision of what is to follow this meeting between the sea-god and the ancient people of Mesopotamia. In your mind's eye, you see the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent building elaborate temples and stepped pyramids for the worship of the high gods. You see humans endeavoring to communicate with the divine by involving all the physical senses—through art, poetry, eroticism, and dance. You see Babylonian priests in richly ornate robes and headdresses invoking and chanting themselves into meditative trances, surrounded by magnificent sculptures of deities and billowing clouds of incense. All manner of food, gemstones, and precious metals are brought to the temple as offerings. Some worshippers shave their heads and fast for several days in supplication to the gods. Others perforen a sensual dance, working themselves to the point of physical exhaustion and falling to the ground in spiritual ecstasy. They push their bodies to the limit in their quest for divine blessings. Then the vision disappears, and you are on the beach once more, facing the god Oannes.

For the rest of the day, Oannes instructs the primitive humans on the beach, teaching them many things that will advance their understanding and irnprove their lives. He teaches them agriculture. He gives them insight into letters, writing, arts, and sciences. He teaches them how to build houses, construct temples, and create laws. He explains mathematics and geometry. He prophesies about the future. To those humans who venture to approach him, he grants psychic abilities. At the end of the day, when the sun begins to set, the god Oannes finishes transmitting this knowledge.

Turning, he quietly slips back under the dark waters. The humans on the beach are transformed by their experience with the god. A new light seems to shine behind their eyes. They gather up their food and possessions and head inland for the night. In the light of morning and the dawn of civilization, they will have much work to do.

Soon the night sky is on you. Now the luminary of the moon shines full and bright over the dark waters of the gulf. Its contorted image is reflected on the water's surface. Your path is clearly visible in the moonlight; you walk away from the beach toward a sandy incline.

Soon you are well inland. The landscape, as well as the feel of the path, has changed; it has become more hostile and forbidding. The land is now rocky and mountainous, with stunted trees growing on either side of the road. The mood has also changed. Off in the distance, a dog bays at the full moon, which hangs in the night sky like a yellow dinner plate against an indigo table cloth. Somewhere in the underbrush, a bird is surprised by a small predatorits startled cry is quickly silenced in the dark. The wind picks up with a howl that rustles through the trees and whips your hair into your eyes. You continue down this dark and eerie path, wondering what to expect.

The moonlight shining through the trees casts monstrous shadows across the road. Ahead, you see the outline of a small human figure. As you approach the figure, you see that it is a handsome child—slight of build with large, soulful eyes that beg for kindness. "I'm lost," the child tells you tearfully. "Can you take me home?"

Protectively, you take the child's small hand in your own and continue down the path. This dark forest is no place for a small child. You are determined to defend the waif from all possible dangers that lie along this trail.

The shadows cast by the trees seem ever more solid and menacing. Your limbs seem to grow heavy. Every step makes you physically tired. Your body wants to rest, to sleep. Soon you are exhausted, but you press onward. At length you come to a crossroads. A wooden sign marks the two roads with symbols—the road to the left is indicated by the image of a dog, while the one to

the right is marked by the image of a fawn. The road that leads straight ahead is unmarked.

The child tugs at your sleeve and points to the road that leads left. "This way," the child indicates. "My home is just down this road." Wearily you begin down the path, but with every step, your feet feel like lead. You move slower and slower, as if the ground beneath your feet has turned to mud. The child becomes more insistent and pulís on your arm, scolding you for your lagging pace. The full, bright moon is gone, as if replaced by the dark new Moon. Something is wrong. The path is too dark now. The child looks at you with cold, inhuman eyes. Suddenly, you shove the child away from you. The small figure falls to the ground and transforms itself finto a snarling black dog with burning red eyes.

The demon before you is one of the *Empusae,* the children of Hecate, the feared goddess of the dark moon. Gathering your strength, you hold up the symbol of Pisces and command the demon to leave: "In divine name of EL, in the permutation of the holy name HEH HEH YOD VAV,[21] and in the power of Oannes, the Wise, and Bel, slayer of the dragon, leave this place!" The demon dog flees, shrieking into the night.

Painfully, you turn back the way you carne. It feels like your legs will collapse beneath you, but you force yourself onward, far past the limitations of what you assumed your physical body could endure. Sheer willpower replaces the strength in your tired muscles.

As you near the crossroads, your strength seems to return with every step. You realize how lucky you are to have escaped the deception of the demon and the enchantments of the dark path. In the center of the road you stop. You are revitalized by your victory over illusion. Looking up, you see that the lustrous full moon—the goddess Selene—has vanquished the dark moon. The bright goddess Selene has returned to illuminate your path. This time you take the middle road marked by the symbol of the fish.

The shadows decrease as you continue down the Path of Qoph. The sky begins to lighten as morning returns. Song birds announce the beginning of another day—they seem to rejoice in having survived the night once more. Ahead, near the side of the road is a large tree with symbols carved into it. As you get closer, you see

that the figures engraved into the bark include an equal-armed cross, the symbol of a fish formed from a vesica, and the word "ichthys" written in Greek. It is the protective symbol of a certain Greek mystery religion—a protective talisman left by a previous traveler on the Path of Qoph.

The path leaves the woods behind and seems to veer once more toward the beach. The warm sand feels good under your sandals. You find yourself walking along the waters of the ancient Persian Gulf, returning the way you carne. You wonder how the primitive humans have faired since you last saw them. You don't have long to wait for an answer, for you see them on a hillside overlooking the beach. They are working—constructing reed huts for shelter, using wooden-handled tools for planting and cultivating grain, and casting fishing nets into the waters. They have been busy putting Oannes' teachings to use.

Your journey on the Path of Qoph is at an end. You walk along the shoreline until you arrive at the entrance to the temple of Malkuth. You enter and take a few moments to warm yourself by the hearth as Sandalphon seals the portal of Qoph. After standing before the altar flame for a few moments of silent meditation, you salute the archangel with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence. You leave the temple of Malkuth behind and reenter the physical realm of waking reality.



The Twenty-eighth Path of Tzaddi

> *The Twenty-eighth Path is called the Natural Intelligence; by it is completed and perfected the nature of all that exists beneath the Sun.*

The "Natural Intelligence" informs us that "all that exists beneath the Sun" is "natural." Even the things that we perceive as super-natural or abnormal, such as the powers of magic, divination, telekinesis, and other so-called supernormal activities, are, in fact, totally natural. They belong to a nature that is "completed and perfected." Through our gradual evolution, what we regard today as

mysterious occurrences may someday be explained as easily as the phenomena of lightning or the aurora borealis.

The Twenty-eighth Path connects the emotive mirad in Netzach with the astral foundation in Yesod. It is therefore a path of deep meditation and contemplation. This is *focused* meditation, a higher form of meditation than that found on the previous path. The process of focused meditation involves concentrating on certain symbols that act as portals to inner knowledge of the cosmos. Through meditation, one consciously participates in the expansion of universal understanding. The Hebrew letter Tzaddi means "fishhook," which alludes to the role this path plays in the act of meditation. The student uses the energies of this path to cast the fishhook (of focused meditation) into the waters of the subconscious in order to catch a bit of divine knowledge. Included within that knowledge is the brief but profound realization that we are the subject of continuous contemplation by the divine life-source on the nature of its own essence. In those short-lived moments where our meditations on the divine come face to face with the divine's meditations on us, true illumination occurs.

One of the tasks to be completed on this path is to learn that patience goes hand-in-hand with the practice of meditation. The student mustn't get discouraged if his meditations are not immediately fruitful. Like the fisherman who waits patiently for a nibble on the hook, the student must be diligent in his work.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF TZADDI

Summary: Journeying from Malkuth to Yesod, the student continues up the Path of Tzaddi where he is afforded a vision of the Garden of Eden, the creation of Adam and Eve, and their expulsion from the Barden. Later, the ancient Greek drama of the star-crossed lovers Endymion and Selene unfolds before him. Finally, he attempts to return to Eden, where he meditates and is granted a vision of the great goddess Aima Elohim. *Path emblem:* The symbol of Aquarius .

The now familiar temple of Malkuth formulates around you. The altar flame lends its comforting warmth to the chamber.

As before, you intone the names which call forth the inhabitants of this temple: *Adonai Ha-Aretz, Sandalphon,* and *Ashim.* Sandalphon appears as she has in all your previous journeys, and you exchange the usual signs. You hold up the symbol of Aquarius for her to see, and she takes you quickly through the eastern portal of Tau. Soon you are at the entrance to the temple of Yesod. You enter without the archangel, giving the Projection Sign. Once inside you give the Sign of Silence.

The nine violet walls of the chamber, along with the enneangle carved into the floor, create a sight that never fails to heighten your sense of awareness. The thick scent of jasmine hangs in the air, bringing with it the tingling sensation of the Kundalini along the nerves of your spine. The phases of the moon carved in quartz and ebony seem to float eerily in the ceiling aboye the incense. The four kerubic statues around the silver altar and its central flame provide an etheric feeling of awe and timelessness.

You call forth the divine names and spiritual inhabitants of Yesod: *Shaddai El Chai, Gabriel,* and *Kerubim.* The beautiful archangel Gabriel formulates in the jasmine mists and addresses you.

"Behold the realm of Foundation—the sphere of the art of magic. You Nave entered the current of the astral light. By what symbol doest thou enter into the temple of flux and reflux?"

You answer: "By the symbol of Aquarius."

The archangel anoints you with perfume as you step finto the sandals of a firm foundation which provide you a better footing in the astral plane. Gabriel then takes you to an archway in the southeast, bearing on its keystone the letter Tzaddi **2** in brilliant white. Within the arch is a veil on which is depicted the tarot card of *The Star.* Gabriel traces the sigil of Aquarius = , and the veil evaporates, disclosing a door of glass on which is a panel of violet-stained glass shaped in the form of the letter Tzaddi. You hold up the Aquarius symbol and trace the letter of the fishhook. The door opens and your journey on the Path of Tzaddi begins.

You find yourself in a dense green forest. This is a place of great power and tranquility. Some distance in front of you is an immense

rocky cliff. A magnificent waterfall cascades from the top of the cliff to a lush garden below. The river of water at the base of the waterfall is crystal clear. It gradually splits into four lesser streams that snake off in different directions, disappearing into the forest.

You become aware of the fact that you are not alone in the garden. Another being is here as well. It is no ordinary creature, but a being of light. It appears to be human, but hermaphroditic, containing aspects of both sexes. The face of this figure is so serene and innocent that it fills you with emotion; you feel a slight throb of empathy in your solar plexus. The connection that you feel with this being is almost indescribable.

The archangel Gabriel speaks to you in your mind, narrating the scene before you:

"And Tetragrammaton Elohim planted a garden eastward in Eden, and out of the ground made Tetragrammaton Elohim to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the Tree of Life also, in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and of Evil. This is the Tree that has two paths.

"And the river Naher went forth out of Eden namely from the Supernal triad, to water the garden, and from thence it was divided into four heads in Daath. This river going forth out of Eden is the Water of Life which proceedeth out of the throne of God.

"And Elohim said, 'Let us make Adam in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth over the earth.' And the Elohim created *Eth ha-Adam* in their own image, in the image of the Elohim they created them, male and female they created them. For 'as aboye, so below.'"[22]

Suddenly, the hermaphroditic figure splits in half. Two distinct beings now stand before you, one male and one female. They are the great archetypal figures that you know as Adam and Eve. In appearance they are a beautiful naked man and a beautiful nude woman. They are mighty, immortal spiritual entities who speak directly to God. The immortal progenitors of the human soul, animus and anima, logic and instincts, separated for the sake of

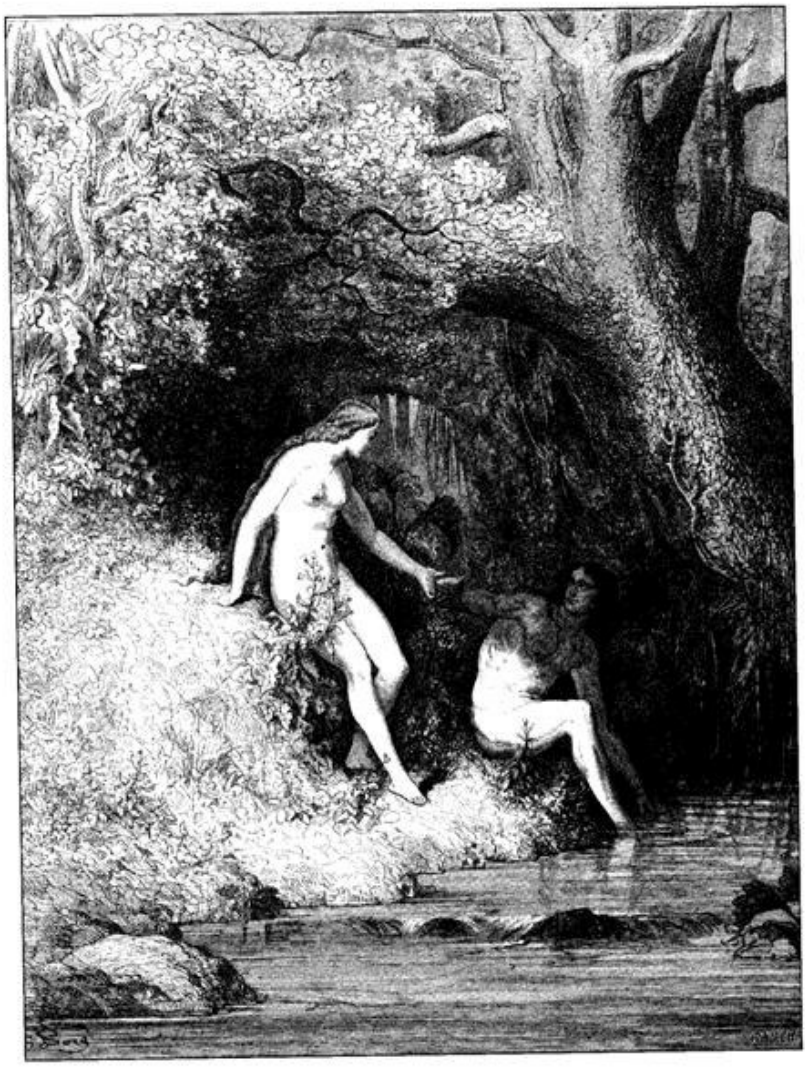


Figure 28: Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden

alchemical reunion. Their mission is to found a new spiritual race, humanity, and to bring that race closer to the divine.

The narrative of the archangel Gabriel proceeds: "And Elohim placed Eth ha-Adam in the Garden of Eden to care for the garden. And Elohim commanded Eth ha-Adam, saying, 'Thou mayest eat from every tree of the garden but not from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and of Evil, for the day that thou eatest from the Tree that has two paths, thou shalt surely die.'

The voice of Gabriel continues: "The rivers of Eden form a cross, and on that cross Adam, the son who was to rule the nations, is extended from Tiphareth, and his arms stretch out to Gedulah and Geburah. And in Malkuth is Eve, Mother of all, completion of all, and aboye the universe she supporteth with her hands the eternal pillars of the Sephiroth. As it is written: 'Aboye the shoulders of that great goddess is nature in her vastness exalted.'"[23]

The two proto-humans frolic playfully in the garden. They are given the task of naming the animals in the garden. These first animals are unlike any that you are familiar with. By naming them, the humans bring their spiritual essence into manifestation. Adam and Eve carry out this task faithfully because it is their greatest desire to be like the Elohim, to emulate the Elohim in the same way that a child emulates a parent.

You notice that a third figure of light enters the garden. It is Nachash the enchanter, Nachash the serpent, Nachash the tester. The enchanter approaches Eve and convences her that the Elohim's commandment against eating from the Tree of Good and Evil is actually a test—Elohim passed a law that was meant to be broken. Adam and Eve were created to emulate God and become more like God. But since God was unbounded by laws, only by breaking God's law could they become like God.

Persuaded by Nachash's line of reasoning, Eve eats from the forbidden tree in her desire to emulate God, and shares its fruit with her mate. Immediately, Adam and Eve receive the knowledge of good and evil—but more that that, they become connected to both good and evil, qualities which did not exist within them until that point. The Elohim could be connected to both good and evil

and not suffer any ill effects. Not so with Adam and Eve, who were to be the founders of a new species.

You hear the voice of Gabriel speaking: "For the great goddess Eve, who supported the columns of the Sephiroth, being tempted by the Tree of Knowledge, whose branches indeed tend upward into the seven lower Sephiroth, but also tend downward unto the Kingdom of shells, reached down unto the Qlippoth, and immediately, the columns were unsupported. The Sephirotic system was shattered, and with it fell Adam, the Microprosopus."[24]

With the first bite of the apple, Adam and Eve lost their immortality. And with the onset of mortality, they were filled with sexual awareness. Entranced and distracted by the power of knowledge of good and evil and of the awakening of the psyche, Eve, the instinctual self, momentarily suspended her support of the Higher Self symbolized by Adam. The result was that they both dropped a level in their closeness to God.

The voice of Gabriel continues the narrative: "And Elohim said, 'Behold Eth ha-Adam has become like us, filled with the knowledge of good and evil. But now they are distracted and unbalanced. The pillars are left unsupported. Let us act before they partake of the Tree of Life and regain immortality before regaining their balance.'

In a flash of light, a great figure appears in the east of the garden. It is a mighty Kerub with four wings—two wings stretch upward and two downward. The Kerub has four heads, that of a mar', a lion, an eagle, and a bull; one head for each letter of the holy name Tetragrammaton. He bears a great Flaming Sword which turns every way to clear the path of the Tree of Life. The angel drives the distressed human couple out of the garden. Sobbing and confused, they are forced out of paradise.

Once they are gone, the Kerub turns to face you. You are told to leave as well. You know that the fall of Adam affects you also. Your soul is connected with good and evil as well, and because the Elohim gave humanity free will, you are free to choose which path to follow. Choose well. Having no wish to antagonize the Kerub, you leave the garden, heading west.

The foliage of the jungle soon envelopes you as you continue on your journey. Giant ferns and thick patches of palmetto scrub are all

around you, and you have to push the stalks away in order to see where you are going. Breaking through the densest portion of the forest, you suddenly find yourself facing a gaping hole in the side of hill. It appears to be a cavern with a rocky ledge overhanging the opening.

Again you hear the voice of Gabriel speaking to you in your mind. "This is the Cave of Treasures," he says.

You enter the cave and find a narrow passageway. You travel deep into its dark inner recesses. The blackness increases until you are unable to see at all. You continue slowly, feeling your way along with your hands and feet. At length you notice a light ahead—another opening to the world outside. As you approach the mouth of the cave, you notice that it is now nighttime. The light that drew you out was the light of the full moon, which softly illuminates the cavern. You are surprised to see a figure lying in the mouth of the grotto—a handsome young man asleep in the moonlight. The soft rays of the moon gently caress his beardless face. Within the moonlight, another shape is forming—a graceful feminine figure robed in silver. It is Selene, the lady of the bright moon, whose beauty was renowned among the gods of Mt. Olympus. The woman kneels down to pick up the young man's hand and press it lovingly against her face.

As you reflect on the figure of the man, wondering about his identity, you seem to recall a story from ancient Greece about a prince named Endymion, the son of the god Zeus and the nymph Calyce. One day, Endymion was hunting on Mt. Latmus. He lay down to rest in a cool grotto and fell asleep. The goddess Selene saw him, and captivated by his beauty, she gently kissed his closed eyes. When the young man awoke, he remembered what had happened as a dream. The young prince journeyed to Mt. Olympus to ask Zeus to grant him immortality and eternal youth. But on being admitted to the abode of the gods, Endymion was brazen and flirtatious with Zeus' wife Hera. Zeus agreed to give the prince what he desired, but as punishment for his intrigue with Hera, it was granted on the condition that Endymion remain eternally asleep. So when the prince returned to the cave on Mt. Latmus to wait for his starlight mistress, he fell into a dreamless sleep from which he has never awakened. Here he remains, eternally young and eternally

asleep. Night after night, the goddess Selene comes to the mountain to silently contemplate the beauty of her sleeping lover who can never again return her love. Since that time, the amorous rays of moonlight caress the sleep of mortals.

Not wishing to intrude on their time together, you leave the goddess kneeling over the prince and walk down a sloping hillside under the starry canopy of night. At the bottom of the hill, you hear the sound of rushing water. A large seven-pointed star in the heavens guides you to the sound of the water. Soon you are standing on the bank of a river, under the indigo sky of night, admiring the stars of the Milky Way aboye.

The pleasant voice of Gabriel speaks to you from the large star overhead: "Follow the river Hiddekel. Bathe in the Waters of Life. Meditate. Your connection to the restored Garden of Eden is through the four rivers."

You wade into the waters of the river, which is knee-deep. Walking against the current, you follow the stream back to its source. Before long, you arrive once more at the Garden of Eden and the waterfall which feeds the four rivers. The Tree of Life is there, along with the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and of Evil. There are no humans or animals anywhere to be seen. Although you don't see the fearsome Kerub who drove you out earlier, the Flaming Sword shaped like a lightning boli hangs in the center of the waterfall, preventing evil from entering the river Naher or the Supernals beyond. The fiery corona of the sword is unharmed by the cascading water.

Drawing as close as you can to the base of the waterfall, you hear Gabriel once more:

"Bathe in the Waters of Life. Meditate. The way to the restored Garden is through the rivers."

You immerse yourself in the water at the bottom of the falls, letting its cool, clear water flow over you. Then you stand up, slightly chilled by the feel of the night air against your wet skin.

Closing your eyes, you begin to mentally intone the divine names of YHVH and the permutation of the name HEH YOD VAV HEH that is associated with the sign of Aquarius. You meditate only on the quiet vibration of the names, shutting out all else.

Then in your mind's eye, you see the usual image of the Tree of Life standing before you. This is the Fallen Tree, with the Supernals separated from the lower Sephiroth by the veil of the Abyss. There is a dark hole at Daath where a Sephirah once existed. Malkuth has dropped into the kingdom of Shells. There is a sudden flash of light and the vision changes. Now you are granted a glimpse of the Tree restored, with Malkuth raised to its original position. Then the vision slowly fades.

You open your eyes and are astonished to see the enormous figure of a woman towering over the summit of the waterfall. She is nude but transparent, and through her unveiled body you can see the starry night sky beyond. She is crowned with the figure of the sun, and the crescent moon is under her feet. On her head is a crown of twelve stars. From two vases she pours forth the Waters of Life, which mingle to form the Supernal river Naher that feeds the waterfall below her. The vision of the goddess is so overwhelming that you cannot help but whisper in a hushed tone, "Mother of God."

The star goddess speaks without opening her mouth: "I am the synthesis of Isis, Nephthys, and Hathor. I also am Aima, Binah, and Tebunah. I am the rain of heaven descending upon earth, bearing with it the fructifying and germinating power. I am the plenteous yielder of harvest. I am the cherisher of life. I am the dew descending viewless and silent, gemming the earth with countless diamonds of dew, bearing down the influence from aboye in the solemn darkness of night. I am the ruler of mist and cloud wrapping the earth, as it were, in a garment, floating and hovering between earth and heaven. I am the giver of the mist-veil of autumn, the successor of the dew-clad night.[25]

"Where the Paternal Monad is, the Monad is enlarged and generateth two, and beside him is seated the Duad. But the mirad of the Father said that all things should be cut finto three. Whose will assented and then all things were divided. For the mind of the Eternal Father said, into three, governing all things by mirad. And there appeared in it the triad, Virtue, Wisdom, and Multicient Truth.[26]

"Know thou that one day, after the formless and the void and darkness are rolled back, the garden shall be restored. The Tree shall no longer be fallen. Know thou, that my offspring, a new

Adam shall restore all things to their previous balance. Just as Adam had been extended on the cross of the celestial rivers, so shall my son, a second Adam, be crucified on the cross of the infernal rivers of Daath. Yet to do this, he must descend finto that Sephirah which is fallen, and be born as a Child of earth."

After the goddess finishes speaking, her outline fades into the constellations of the Milky Way. You are filled with inspiration and creativity, and you know that someday you just might reach the restored Garden of Eden through hard work, discipline, and meditation. Soon the fingers of morning begin to grasp the eastern edge of the sky, pushing the stars ever higher aboye the horizon. As dawn breaks over the garden, you know it is time to leave. You turn away from the garden to face the portal into Yesod.

Entering the temple of Yesod, you replace the violet sandals to the foot of the altar. Gabriel then guides you back to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon seems particularly pleased to see you alter this journey and welcomes you with an embrace worthy of an archangel. She then closes the portal of Tzaddi. As always you allow yourself a few moments of silent communion over the altar flame with Sandalphon. After this journey, such moments of silence seem pregnant with conversation. Finally, bidding the archangel farewell, you salute with the Projection Sign. She in turn gives the Sign of Silence.

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The Twenty-seventh Path of Peh

> *The Twenty-seventh Path is the Active or Exciting Intelligence, and it is so called because through it every existent being receives its spirit and motion.*

The "Active or Exciting Intelligence" denotes a great flurry of cosmic activity on the path that runs between Netzach (emotions/fire) and Hod (intellect/water). This lowermost of the horizontal paths reflects the whirling motions that produced Kether from the Limitless Light at a low level on the Tree, where all energies are more clearly felt by "every existent being" in the physical realm. Through

the activity of the Exciting Intelligence, all created beings are vitalized with "motion" and infused with "spirit."

The Hebrew letter Peh mean "mouth," which is the vehicle for speech and the intonation of words and sounds. The power of the letter Peh is that of vibration. All particles of matter are said to have their own vibratory rate. This oscillation of energy is part of what defines one substance from another substance. The letter Peh is a symbol of the materialization of abstract thought-forms through the vibrated word. Magicians tap into this power by learning how to vibrate god-names and other words of power.

The "Active Intelligence" of this path seems destructive to us, but in reality, this is merely the process of disintegration—the breaking down of the old in favor of the new, just as the breaking down of fossil fuels releases a great amount of energy. It is a reapportioning of energy brought about by vibration. The universe itself is powered by this continuous cycle of demolition and renewal.

The task of the student on the Twenty-seventh Path is two-fold. First, he must harness the power of the spoken word and relinquish old, outmoded forms or ideas, letting new ones evolve. In addition, the traveler on this path must strive to maintain a healthy balance between emotions (Netzach) and intellect (Hod).

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF PEH

Summary: The student travels from Malkuth to Hod and continues on the path of Peh, where he witnesses the great Babylonian epic of Creation as told in the *Enuma Elish,* the battle between the gods of light and the gods of chaos. *Path emblem:* The spear 1.

Behind the darkness of your closed eyelids, you begin to visualize the astral temple of the Sephirah Malkuth, as the journey begins:

The ten-sided chamber of Malkuth appears around you. As on previous journeys, you intone the names which call forth the inhabitants of this temple: *Adonai Ha-Aretz, Sandalphon,* and *Ashim.* Sandalphon comes forth and you exchange the usual signs. When she

asks why you have entered her abode, you hold up the spear. Swiftly, the archangel leads you through the portal of Shin in the northeast of the temple and up the Thirty-first Path to the temple of Hod. Leaving Sandalphon, you enter the water temple, giving the Projection Sign. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

Once again you are in the octagonal temple of Hod. The walls are draped in curtains of orange silk, the floor is encrusted with fire opals in the shape of an octagon, and the ceiling is ornamented with the sigil of Mercury ☿ and the figure of a cup ☵. On the blue altar in the middle of this sacred chamber, covered by an apron, is the familiar disk of opal containing the temple flame, the chalice of water and the Book of Knowledge engraved with the figure of an octogram.

To announce your presence in the temple and call forth its inhabitants, you vibrate the divine name *Elohim Tzaboath* and the name of the archangel *Michael. You* then call on the order of angels known as the *Beni Elohim.*

Michael appears just as you remember him; a swarthy, robust figure in robes of orange with a blue octogram emblazoned across his chest. Great blue and orange wings grace his muscular shoulders. Tucked under one arm is a book. He speaks:

"Behold the Vision of Splendor and the reflection of Merey! By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the martial symbol of the spear."

Satisfied, the archangel takes you to the right side of the chamber and draws back a portion of the orange drapery to reveal a red archway bearing a white letter Peh on its keystone. Within the arch is a veil with the tarot image of *The Tower* painted on it. Michael traces the symbol of Mars d', and the veil fades into mist. In its place is a door carved from pure ruby. You hold up the spear and trace the letter Peh before the door, which dissolves. Stepping through the portal, you enter the Path of Peh.

You find yourself immersed in a kind of void or vacuum—a nebulous black-gray area of darkness and silence. You hear the voice of Michael as he narrates an ancient drama:

"Ere the Eternal instituted the Formation, beginning and end existed not. Therefore, before him, he expanded a certain veil, and therein He instituted the primal kings. And these are the kings who

reigned in Edom before there reigned a king over Israel. But they subsisted not. When the earth was formless and void— behold this is the reign of EDOM. And when the Creation was established, lo, this is the reign of Israel. And the wars of titanic forces in the chaos of Creation, lo, these are the wars between them.

"From a light-bearer of unsupportable brightness proceeded a radiating flame, hurling forth, like a vast and mighty hammer, those sparks which were the primal worlds. And these sparks flamed and scintillated awhile, but being unbalanced, they were extinguished. Since lo, the kings assembled, they passed away together. And these be the kings of Edom who reigned before there reigned a king over Israel."[27]

The grayness fades away. Now the vision changes, and you see before you a mass of still, black water, darker than any water you have ever seen. You feel utterly alone in an alien world. Michael continues:

"From mankind's oldest writings, the following legend is revealed. In the earliest times when the sky aboye had not been named and the earth below was nameless, there existed only Apsu, the sweet waters of the primordial abyss—the ocean which circled the universe, and Tiamat, the salty, tumultuous sea. Then there was a stirring in the waters. The waters mingled and from their mingling carne the first ones, Lahmu and Lahamu, the essence of male and female, who gave birth to Anshar and Kisar, the masculine heavens and the feminine earth. To Anshar and Kisar were born the great gods Anu, the god of Heaven, Ea, the god of Wisdom, and the many younger gods."

You see before you a stirring in the primordial waters of darkness, like swirling clouds of mud in the bottom of a pond. In the middle of this commotion, you see two serpentine shapes developing, one a thread of light and the other a thread of darkness. The two threads entwine each other like the serpents on the Caduceus wand of Hermes, then both disappear into the cloudy waters. In their place you see a disk surrounded by the waters of the abyss. It is the essence of the terrestrial world, ringed with mountains on which rests the vault of the heavens.

The narrative of Michael continues: "The primordial gods were deities of darkness and disorder. The younger gods were deities of light and order. The ways of the younger gods were foreign to the older gods of chaos and silence. Apsu, the ancient one, declared that there would be no peace for him as long as the newcomers dwelt in the heavens, making noise with their thunder, their arguments, their laughter, and their lovemaking. His mate, Tiamat, the water-dragon of chaos, agreed, and vowed to make war on the younger gods. She made elaborate plans to destroy the gods of order. These were wars of titanic forces in the chaos of Creation. Lo, these are the wars between them."

The cloudy water swirls violently and the scene before you fades into darkness. You find yourself in a magnificent heavenly palace high aboye the skies of the earth. You are in the presence of the celestial deities of ancient Mesopotamia—three hundred in all. There is Be1,[28] the lord of the storm and king of the land; Ea,[29] the god of knowledge and wisdom, and their companion goddesses, Belit[30] and Damkina.[31] Shamash, the god of the sun, and Sin, the god of the moon, are also part of the assembly, as well as the great goddess Ishtar. In the eastern part of the palace is a great golden throne, on either side of which are the stone figures of winged bulls. Seated on the throne is Anu, the god of power and justice—supreme sovereign of heaven who holds court in this celestial hierarchy. He is a mature, bearded figure crowned with the horned diadem of royalty and holding the staff of command. His dark eyes convey great wisdom and authority. The god raises his hand for silence, and a hush settles over the crowd.

Anu speaks: "Be silent. War is upon us. Even now, Tiamat seeks revenge against us and plots our destruction. I would hear what my brother, Ea the wise, has to say."

Ea, the god of wisdom, steps forward. He leans heavily on his crook as he relays the bad news to Anu and the assembly of gods:

"Long ago I heard that Apsu planned to destroy us and return the heavens and the earth to chaos and oblivion. To defeat him I cast a potent and holy spell, a powerful invocation. 1 recited the words and sent them into the deep, into the realm of Apsu, and he fell into

a deep, soundless sleep. Finding him thus, I went finto the realm of Apsu. 1 bound and slaughtered both he and his advisor.

"Having defeated our enemies, 1 established my dwelling upon the waters of Apsu. I named my abode 'Apsu,' and in my sacred chamber I found peace. There my wife Damkina and I dwelt in splendor. In the heart of Apsu, in the chamber of fates, in the abode of destinies, a god was engendered—my son, whom you know today as Marduk, wisest and most powerful of us all. I rejoiced at his birth and 1 raised him to perfection. 1 endowed him with greatness. My son is the sun of the heavens.

"But on the day that 1 killed Apsu, his mate, the dragon Tiamat, was enraged. She swore vengeance against all the younger gods. Tiamat gathered up a certain number of gods who rallied to her cause. From the waters of the great deep, she summoned forth the most fearsome monsters to form her army. They march at the side of Tiamat. Enraged, they plot without ceasing night and day. They are set for combat, growling and raging. She has appointed her consort, Kingu, to lead her army. My father, Anshar, is distressed. He sent me to kill Kingu, just as 1 killed Apsu before him. But Tiamat protects her commander with a powerful magic spell. 1 cannot defeat him. We must elect a mighty champion who will vanquish our enemy."

Showing concern, the god Anu speaks. "Our father, Anshar, sent me to speak with the great dragon to assuage her anger and abate her wrath. But Tiamat cannot be reasoned with. I cannot defeat her. We must elect a mighty champion who will vanquish our enemy."

Ea the vise spoke up: "Our father, Anshur, has chosen our avenger. I summon my son, Marduk, mightiest of all. Marduk, who makes my heart swell with pride. Marduk, the most powerful of heroes, whose strength is outstanding, whose onslaught is past resisting. My son who is the sun of heavens. Marduk shall be our champion."

The assembly of gods agreed. "Marduk!" they cry. "Marduk will be our champion!" The crowd parts as a tall and powerful figure strides forward to approach the throne. Clothed with the halo of ten gods, Marduk addresses Anu, and when he opens his mouth to speak, fire issues from his lips:

"I will go and attain thy heart's desire. But if 1 am to vanquish Tiamat and save your lives, then set up the Assembly, proclaim my destiny to be supreme! Be glad and rejoice; you shall soon tread upon the neck of Tiamat!"

The gods rejoice in their champion. Then Marduk is set on the throne of heaven. He is made sovereign over all the gods, even over Anu. They prepare a banquet in his honor and declare him king of the gods. They present Marduk with the royal vestments and weapons. They prayed to him who was the greatest of them all. "O lord," they cry. "We have granted you kingship over the entire universe. Your weapons shall not fail; they shall smash your foes! O lord, spare the life of those who trust you. But pour out the life of the god who seized evil. May the winds carry her blood to secret places."

The banquet scene before you fades and you find yourself in the center of a celestial battlefield in the heavenly abyss of Apsu. From the deep waters of darkness and chaos, Tiamat's army pours forth to destroy the gods of light. Hideous monsters of all descriptions make up her dreadful horde: gigantic, venomous serpents with poison for



Figure 29: Marduk and Tiamat

blood, huge dragons who can roast their foes with a mere glance, enormous savage dogs with shark-like teeth, creatures which are part human-part scorpion, and countless other horrible beasts. They pour out of the abyss in a rage, berserk with bloodlust. Their combined screams culminate in low, frenzied roar that is absolutely alien to human ears. At their head is Kingu, the commander-in-chief, protected by Tiamat's magic and armed to the teeth with sharp weapons. The she-dragon herself is at his side, her scaly body still wet from the watery abyss and flames darting from her eyes and nostrils. Her awful roar is enough to terrify all but the bravest of the gods.

From the abode of light, Marduk enters the battlefield in a flaming chariot. He is flanked by his father-gods, the rulers of fate and destiny, and various deities of storm. Like a golden-winged Kerub, the mighty king of the gods faces the evil host of darkness. A halo of fire illuminates his regal figure. Dressed for battle, he is beautiful and terrible to look at. Flashes of lightning brighten the path before him, and with every step you hear a clap of thunder. His passing produces hailstones the size of boulders. He carries in his right hand a great bow and in his left a heavy mace. A quiver of arrows hangs at his side. He advances on Tiamat, rebuking the she-dragon for her wickedness and challenging her to single combat.

Rearing up on her hindquarters, the chaos-dragon hurls a series of powerful magic spells at her adversary. A lesser god would have been incinerated, but Marduk does not even flinch. He casts a great net over Tiamat, trapping her. He stations the four winds around her in the east, west, north, and south. Then he throws an evil wind, a deadly hurricane, into her face. The dragon bellows in rage, attempting to swallow the god whole. As she does so, Marduk forces the lethal winds down her throat. As Tiamat chokes on the evil wind, Marduk shoots an arrow into her heart. With a roar of pain, the dragon falls on her side, the ground shaking beneath her. Marduk raises his club, and with one mighty blow, he shatters the dragon's head. Then, responding to the cheers of joy from the gods of light, the victorious god stands over the body of the slain dragon.

The death of Tiamat spreads confusion through the ranks of her followers. The dark gods who had aided her tremble with terror. In disarray, they flee to try and save their lives. But they are quickly

surrounded and taken prisoner. Panic-stricken, one of the venomous serpents slithers toward you to escape the wrath of Marduk. You hold up the spear to threaten it and stamp heavily on the monster's head.

"In divine name of ELOHIM GIBOR, Lord of Hosts, stand!" The demon flees from you to join the rest of the captives.

From Kingu, the commander of the evil host, Marduk takes back the stolen Tablets of Destiny. Then the victorious one orders that Tiamat's army be put into chains and cast into the infernal regions. The gods of light see that this is done. But Tiamat's commander is ordered to remain.

Then, while the gods sing his praises, Marduk contemplates what to do with the dragon's body. He decides to create orderly works of art from the carcass of chaos. He splits the body of the chaos-dragon in two—filleted like a fish. With one half, he fashions the vault of the heavens, and from the other he creates the earth. Next, he divides the upper waters from the lower waters to make dwelling places for the gods Anu, Bel, and Ea and gives them the constellations as their images. He set his bow and his net into the heavens as constellations also. Then he institutes the yearly cycle of the earth, and establishes the rule of the moon by night and the rule of the sun by day. The waters of chaos recede as the universe comes into being—the planets, the stars, and the galaxies.

From Tiamat's saliva he formed the clouds and filled them with water. From her crushed skull he created the mountains. From her eyes he established the ancient rivers—the Tigris and the Euphrates. From her arteries he formed the streams and lakes.

The younger gods rejoice at Marduk's great victory. They bring him all manner of gifts to show their appreciation. They declare him supreme sovereign, king of all the gods, and patron of the sanctuaries. They swear their allegiance to their new champion and promise to carry out his commands. Marduk speaks to the assembly:

"In the Apsu 1 have built the abode of the gods. Below you 1 have formed the stable earth. I shall create a new race, called man, from the blood of Kingu, Tiamat's rebel. Then man will honor and serve the gods.

"I have brought light into the world. 1 have hardened the ground for a building site. Here I will build a house to be my splendid abode. I will found a temple there to establish my authority, and to receive the assembly of the gods when they descend from the heavens. I will call my house Babylon, the 'house of the great gods.'"

You are relieved that Marduk was able to defeat Tiamat and paye the way for all seekers of light and balance. It is your victory as well, for you shiver to think what might have happened had chaos triumphed over order. Eternal darkness would have reigned supreme, and humanity might never have come into being. Your final image of Marduk is of a kingly figure, surrounded by a halo of golden light and an entourage of adoring gods.

Then the vision of Babylon and its ancient deities fades away. You are left with one final image—the Tree of Life. You see the ten Sephiroth, the vessels that were strong enough to contain the light of the divine. Finally, this vision fades as well. It is time to leave the Path of Peh.

Once again you find yourself back at the water temple of Hod. You are reluctant to leave this place of learning, but you know that what you have accomplished today will take time to fully comprehend. Thanking the archangel Michael, you descend the Path of Shin to the temple of Malkuth.

Sandalphon quickly seals the portal of the Thirty-first Path behind you. She brings a chalice of water to give you a long, cool drink from the fountain. The Ashim are quite noticeable in the temple after your journey on the Path of Peh. They resemble Yods of flame dancing aboye the altar. You enjoy their company a while before leaving. Finally, you bid goodbye to the inhabitants of the temple and salute with the Projection Sign. Sandalphon gives the Sign of Silence.

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Netzach

Netzach is the seventh Sephirah and the sphere of "Victory" and emotion. The victory of Netzach is the realization of the beauty and life-force that the divine has placed in all manifested things. It is the love of nature in all her aspects. The seventh sphere is the realm of the passions that drive humans to the creative arts. Netzach is the sphere where humans begin to feel the presence of the gods with the emotions. This is also the Sephirah of social consciousness and interpersonal relationships. Venus, the planet of love, is attributed to Netzach.

The *Sepher Yetzirah* says:

> *The Seventh Path is the Occult Intelligence, because it is the Refulgent Splendor of all the Intellectual virtues which are perceived by the eyes of the intellect, and by the contemplatíon of faith.*

The "Occult Intelligence" obviously refers to hidden intelligence. This is something hidden deep within ourselves that we must uncover—our divine nature that is hidden from us by mundane obstacles. The "Refulgent or Brilliant Splendor of the Intellectual virtues" is the divine white light mediated through the prism of Tiphareth, reflected into many-rayed hues (or aspects of manifestation). The one light reduces to many for the purpose of manifestation into form. The phrase "eyes of the intellect" alludes to the wisdom of Chokmah at the apex of the Pillar of Mercy, while the passage "contemplations of faith" refers to the act of devotion, the ímpetus behind all spiritual attainment.

Netzach is a dynamic force that inspires us and drives us. This sphere is a reflection of the fiery Geburah, but at the level of the human personality, mediated by Tiphareth, the fire becomes desire and emotion. Art, music, dance, and poetry are examples of Netzach energy. In this sphere, we find all expressions of beauty and love, but also the less understood emotions of anger and bate, because all emotions dwell here. It is for this reason that the energies of Netzach must be balariced by its opposite, Hod. Hod gives form to Netzach's force.

The seventh sphere is the home of the "group mind," the storehouse of images and symbols in all of us which inspires the artist, the dancer, and the musician.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO NETZACH

Summary: The student travels from Malkuth to Yesod to Netzach, where he encounters the archangel Haniel and the angelic choir known as the Elohim, the gods. He is given a vision of the temple of Aphrodite-Urania, where he observes an ancient priest whose intense devotion is rewarded by the manifestation of his beloved goddess. *Netzach emblem:* The *Uadj* or papyrus scepter T.

Carrying the Uadj staff, you enter the temple of Malkuth with the appropriate signs. Sandalphon takes you quickly up the Path of Tau to the temple of Yesod. In Yesod you greet Gabriel and put on the violet sandals. The archangel leads you quickly up the Twentyeighth Path of Tzaddi.

You see yourself standing at the end of the violet Path of Tzaddi, facing the door to the astral temple of Netzach. A large emerald-green door is in front of you. Carved into this door is the letter Nun painted in red. You give the Projection Sign and step through the door into Netzach. Once on the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.

The temple is a great seven-sided chamber draped in curtains of green silk. The floor and ceiling are constructed of pure emerald, while the ceiling itself is ornamented with the ruby figure of a heptagram. Seven emerald columns entwined with grapevines sur-round the central altar of ruby, on which is a temple flame, a sistrum, and seven roses. The scent of rose is in the air.

To announce your presence in the temple and call forth its inhabitants, you vibrate the divine name *YHVH Tzabaoth* and the name of the archangel *Haniel.* Then you call on the order of angels known as the *Elohim.*

The winged archangel Haniel appears, a fair-haired feminine being in robes of green chiffon. Emblazoned on her chest is a red

heptagram. Her wings are green, tipped with red and gold. Grape leaves are delicately woven into her hair, and she holds in her hand a red rose. She addresses you:

"You Nave entered the realm of the Occult Intelligence. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the Uadj wand." You hold up the scepter.

Haniel responds: "The papyrus staff is sacred to Hathor and Bast. It is an emblem of triumph, joy, and vitality. A worthy symbol for the realm of Victory."

Facing the archangel across the light of the altar, she directs your attention to the temple flame burning brightly in an emerald bowl. The temple around you suddenly becomes transparent. It fades from view and is replaced by fire and smoke. Gradually you see before you what appears to be an endless expanse of fire. You hear the crackling of the flames and see glowing embers flying from blaze to blaze. You hear Haniel's voice over the roar of the flames:

"The creator of all, self-operating, formed the world, and there was a certain mass of fire. For not in matter did the fire which is in the beyond first enclose his powers in acts, but in MIND! For the Former of the fiery world is the mind of mind, who first sprang from mind, clothing the one fire with the other fire, binding them together so that he might mingle the fountainous craters while preserving unsullied the brilliance of his own fire—and thence a fiery whirlwind drawing down the brilliance of the flashing flamepenetrating the abysses of the universe; thence-from downwards all extend their wondrous rays, abundantly animating light, fire, aether, and the universe."[32]

The fire before you burns ever brighter. The heat is oppressive. You must shield your eyes from the brilliant flames, but light seems to enter your closed eyelids. Haniel continues:

"Such a fire existeth, extending through the rushings of air or even a fire formless whence cometh the image of a voice, or even a flashing light, abounding, revolving, whirling forth, crying aloud."

You hear a loud thunderclap, and the fire and heat are gone in a flash. Feéling a bit singed around the edges, you open your eyes. All you see now is the divine white brilliance, which slowly settles into a mountainous hillside. Seven terraced steps are carved into

the side of the mountain, the summit of which is lost in the clouds. Standing on these steps are various god-forms from several different pantheons: Egyptian, Sumerian, Greek, Norse, Hindu, and several others that you are unfamiliar with. You recognize the ibis-headed Thoth and the jackal-headed Anubis. You see the Greek sun god Apollo, the Canaanite goddess Astarte, the Norse god Odin, the Celtic goddess Brigit, and a host of others. They are an eclectic group of deities.

One of their number steps forward. It appears to be Hathor, the Egyptian goddess of love dressed in a long green tunic, but you also recognize her to be Haniel Elohel, ruler of the angelic host of Netzach. Hathor speaks:

"We are the Elohim, the gods, the order of angels associated with the sphere of Netzach. We are your conception of the gods. We reveal the beauty and simplicity of the universe. We engage humanity's passionate feelings for the gods and the creative arts. For centuries, humans have both feared and adored us. We are the contacts that enable humans to empathize and form relationships with the higher powers of the Sephiroth. We connect humanity to the divine by offering images of the divine for humans to focus their love and build their faith upon. We give a face to that which is abstract. We offer humankind god-forms that can be experienced. We sustain and uplift the human soul with our stories of justice, courage, power, and grace. We are teachers of the soul who point the way to ultimate truths. We are the principies of 'god-experience' within you."

Hathor points to the papyrus wand in your hand. "This symbol is sacred to Hathor, goddess of love," she tells you. "But Aphrodite is the godform chosen by the divine to instruct you in the mysteries of Netzach."

Hathor, the rest of the deities, and the terraced mountain they stand on all fade from your view in swirl of green mist. You find yourself in an ancient Greek temple. The rectangular temple is built from light gray limestone and surrounded on all sides by a Doric colonnade. A series of white marble columns line the interior of the sanctuary. Four large censers in the corners of the main temple room feed a perpetual stream of rose-scented incense into the air.

There is no ceiling, for the temple opens out to the heavens aboye. In the east is an enormous statue of the Aphrodite-Urania—the heavenly Aphrodite—goddess of pure and ideal love. Before the sculpture is a great altar covered with all variety of food and flowers—offerings to this most graceful of goddesses.

Kneeling before the statue is a middle-aged priest. The white-robed figure is enraptured—deeply absorbed in an intense prayer. Drawing closer, you hear a portion of his invocation to Aphrodite:

"O foam-born Kythereia! Mother of both gods and men! Etherial and chthonic mother of all nature! Goddess unsubdued, who holds things together, who causes the great fire to revolve, who keeps the ever-moving *Barza,* the Shining Light, in her unbroken course. You accomplish everything, from head to toe, and by your will is holy water mixed. By your hands you move potent magic



Figure 30: Venus/Aphrodite

amid the stars. The world's midpoint you control. You move holy desire into the souls of men and women, through all the days to come. Our goddess queen! Come to these chants, Mistress."[33]

The prayers of the priest grow more impassioned. He beats his hands against the stone floor of the sanctuary as he vibrates the name of Aphrodite several times. He seems to be working himself into a trance state, similar to the state of ecstasy or passion experienced by mystics of all religious traditions.

As you admire the priest's discipline, you are suddenly aware of a white mist forming in the air before the statue of Aphrodite. Gradually, the mist takes the shape of a woman. Twice as tall as any human, the fully materialized figure of the goddess Aphrodite, half-draped in green silk, reveals her beauty and grace to the adoring servant kneeling at her feet. Wavy, light brown hair frames an oval face with half-moon eyes of translucent gray. The goddess of love speaks to her faithful priest:

"I was sent forth from the power, and 1 have come to those who reflect upon me, For 1 am the first and the last. I am the honored one and the scorned one. I am the whore and the holy one. I am the wife and the virgin. 1 am the mother and the daughter. For 1 am shame and boldness. I am war and peace. Give heed to my poverty and my wealth. I am compassionate and I am cruel. 1 am the one who is honored and praised, and who is despised scornfully. 1 am peace, and war has come because of me. I am control and the uncontrollable. I am the union and the dissolution. I am the judgment and the acquittal.

"I am sinless, and the root of sin derives from me. 1 am lust in outward appearance, and interior self-control exists within me. 1 know the first ones and those after them know me. I am the command of those who ask of me, and of gods in their seasons by my counsel, and of spirits of every man who exists with me, and of women who dwell within me. "[34]

Tears of joy stream down the priest's face. You are moved by his utter devotion to his goddess. It is obvious that he is totally dedicated to her. Watching him interact with the goddess, you can only imagine the depth of his faith in her. Aphrodite continues to speak:

"I am the Gate of the Mysteries. And my symbol, the sigas of Venus, embraces the ten spheres of the Eternal Tree. All are touched by me. My symbol graces the door of the inner sanctum, for 1 am the portal to the divine. My number, se-ven, is called 'holy,"divine,' 'abundance,' and 'virgin.' The divine one has loved and blessed the number seven more than all things under the vault of heaven. Seven is the height aboye, seven is the depth below.

"Some have called my abode the Occult Intelligence. 1 have hidden from you, but whenever you conceal yourself, I myself will appear. But whenever you appear, I will hide myself from you. I am the primal power to be found deep within your inmost being. 1 am power. 1 am instinct. I am inspiration. Mine is the force of attraction and aversion. My power can be used with wisdom, with intellect—or it can be abused through malice and wasted through ignorance. Approach me delicately and with respect—like you would handle a deadly weapon. Those who truly love me will honor me in an equilibrated fashion. And 1 will reward those who uphold my highest ideals with love, vigor, and endless creativity. Although 1 am hidden, I am always here."

Aphrodite reaches down and places her hand on her servant's head. A halo of light is seen around the priest—his aura shines with brilliance. It is impossible to tell just what the goddess and her priest are communicating to each other, but when the goddess removes her hand from his head, he appears to be in a state of rapture. He graciously thanks the goddess for granting Hm this experience. With a hint of a smile on her lips, Aphrodite fades hito the mist. The priest meditates on his vision, engrossed in quiet introspection. You decide to leave him in peace. It's time to go back.

Gradually, the temple of Aphrodite fades from your view and vanishes in a flash of light. You find yourself in the temple of Netzach once again, standing in front of the altar across from Haniel, the archangel of Netzach. Like your other Sephirotic experiences, the visions that were shown to you have occurred within this sanctuary—you never left the temple of Netzach. Haniel allows you a few moments to orient yourself. You thank her for this glimpse of the mysteries of Netzach.

Quickly, you descend the Path of Tzaddi back to Yesod, where you briefly anoint yourself with oil and return the astral slippers. Descending the Path of Tau, you find yourself in the temple of Malkuth in the company of Sandalphon. Turning to face the por-tal through which you first entered the temple, you give the Projection Sign and pass through it. On the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.



Endnotes

1. Descriptions of the Projection Sign and the Sign of Silence are given in Chapter Nine, page 198.
2. From the Zelator Ritual. (Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 145-146). An illustration of the Flaming Sword can be found in our book *Self-Initiation into the Golden Dawn Tradition,* Plate 1.
3. Specifically, *Michael Ashel* or "Michael of Fire." He is different from *Michael Hodael* or "Michael of Hod."
4. Specifically, *Gabriel Maimel* or "Gabriel of Water." She is different from *Gabriel Yesodel* or "Gabriel of Yesod."
5. Specifically, *Raphael Ruach* or "Raphael of Air." He is different from *Raphael Topharethel* or "Raphael of Tiphareth."
6. The constellation of Taurus. Gugalanna was killed by the hero Gilgamesh.
7. Binah (the Neshamah) is the seat of the higher intuition.
8. This is *Gabriel Yesodel* or "Gabriel of Yesod." She is also *Gabriel Kerubiel,* the leader of the Kerubim.
9. From the Zelator Ritual. (Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 147).
10. Adapted from the Theoricus Ritual. (Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 157).
11. Adapted from portions of the Chaldean Oracles and the Practicus Ritual of the Golden Dawn.
12. See previous endnote.
13. Pronounced "ray."
14. Any magical symbol worn by magicians. Usually worn about the neck sus-pended from a collar.
15. Adapted from a Hymn to Re in *The Book of the Dead.*
16. John 1:1-5.
17. Genesis 6:2.
18. Paraphrased from the *Divine Pymander.*

19. Adapted from Libellus XII from the *Corpus Hermeticum.*

20. The account of the fish-god Oannes (a form of Ea) was written by Berossos, a priest of Bel (Marduk) at Babylon in the late fourth to early third centuries B.C.E. An abridgement of his work was written by Alexander Polyhister in the first century B.C.E. Berossos was the authoritative source of Babylonian knowledge for the ancient Greeks. The myth told by Oannes relates to the story of Marduk and Tiamat.

21. One of twelve permutations of the Tetragrammaton. Associated with Pisces.

22. This section was adapted from portions of the Zelator and Practicus Rituals. (Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 145, 167, 177).

23. From the Practicus Ritual. (Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 177-178). Also see our book *Self-Initiation into the Golden Dawn Tradition,* Plate 3.

24. From the Philosophus Ritual. (Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 193). Also see our book *Self-Initiation into the Golden Dawn Tradition,* Plate 4.

25. Adapted from the Philosophus Ritual. (Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 187-188).

26. Ibid., 187.

27. Ibid., 190.

28. Or Enlil.

29. Or Enki.

30. Or Ninlil

31. Or Ninhursaga.

32. From the Practicus Ritual. (Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 170-171).

33. Adapted from an excerpt from Betz, 93-94. Aphrodite's title of "Kythereia" refers to the island of Kythera which was believed to be Aphrodite's birth-place. A temple of Aphrodite-Urania was located there.

34. Adapted from Robinson's "The Thunder, Perfect Mind," *The Nag Hammadi Library,* 271-277.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE MIDDLE REALMS OF THE TREE

The Sephiroth and Navitoth of the central portion of the Tree, between the Veil of Paroketh and the Abyss, relate to experiences that are within the upper range of human potential. These spheres and paths are of primary importance to the mystic and the magician. The paths here are especially concerned with ordeals of self-sacrifice, challenge, and transformation.

Until now, the student has journeyed on the paths by following the reverse of their numerical order. Thus, the pathworkings began with the tenth Sephirah and continued to the ninth, eighth, and seventh spheres. The first of the paths encountered was the Thirty-second Path, followed by the Thirty-first, and so on. Paths beginning in lower spheres always preceded paths that began in higher spheres and were numbered accordingly.

This pattern changes with the Path of Samekh, however. Here the numerical sequence of the Navitoth no longer coincides with the ascending order of the paths. Three paths lead up to Tiphareth—the lowermost is the Path of Samekh, which runs between Yesod and the sixth Sephirah, but it is numbered as the Twenty-fifth Path and not the Twenty-sixth as one would normally expect.[1] Thus, the initiate travels from the Twenty-seventh Path to

Netzach, and then takes the Twenty-fifth Path, followed by the Twenty-sixth and the Twenty-fourth. After the Twenty-fourth Path the numbering of the Navitoth returns to its natural order.

The discrepancy in the numbering is due to the fact that the Path of Samekh crosses a primary boundary on the Tree of Life, the Veil of Paroketh. It is important to assimilate the lessons of the Twenty-fifth Path of Samekh before approaching those of Ayin and Nun. Of these three paths, the middle one must be traveled first.

The Twenty-fifth Path of Samekh

> *The Twenty-fifth Path is the Intelligence of Probation or Temptation, and it is so called because it is the primary temptation, by which the Creator trieth all righteous persons.*

The "Intelligence of Probation or Temptation" indicates that this is a path where students must use discrimination and constantly test the veracity of their spiritual beliefs through a process of trial and error, careful measurement, and frequent tests and tribulations. Just as a sword is "tempered" in fire and water, the student on the Twenty-fifth Path between the fire of the sun (Tiphareth) and the water of the moon (Yesod) is tempered, strengthened, and balanced by the constant, rhythmical application of opposite influences. By administering "temptations," the Creator strengthens the soul of the student so that it becomes a fit and resilient vessel for the divine life-force, and so it develops the ability to discern truth from falsehood and remain in a state of perfect balance.

The Hebrew letter Samekh means "prop" or "support," which implies divine guidance in the face of temptation. Here the student's beliefs are confirmed by effort and the overcoming of adversity. On the Twenty-fifth Path, the student who perseveres comes into contact with the Higher Self and experiences the presence of the divine. When a person truly experiences the energies of this mystical path, by-passing the various temptations that can obstruct growth, the result is an exalted state of consciousness wherein nothing looks exactly as it did before.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF SAMEKH

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Yesod and continues on the Path of Samekh. He climbs the ladder of Jacob up to a higher level on the Tree and encounters Yeheshuah (Jesus of Nazareth), who has spent forty days in the wilderness only to be tempted and tested by Diabolos, the Accuser. The student meets his own Accuser and undergoes the "Dark Night of the Soul." *Path emblem:* A golden arrow

With your eyes closed, you begin to formulate the astral temple of Malkuth as the journey begins. The ten-sided chamber of Malkuth appears as before. Without hesitation, you intone the names of the forces and beings who abide within this temple: *Adonai ha-Aretz, Sandalphon,* and *Ashim.* Sandalphon appears and you exchange the usual signs. She inquires about your reason for entering her domain and you hold up the symbol of the golden arrow. The archangel leads you quickly through the portal of Tau in the east of the temple and up the Thirty-second Path to the ethereal temple of Yesod. Leaving Sandalphon, you enter the astral temple with the Projection Sign. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

Nine violet walls surround you. On the floor is the figure of the enneangle, and in the ceiling aboye are the phases of the moon. Statues of the four Kerubim stand guard over the silver altar in the center of the room.

You call out the names of the powers and beings who make this temple their home: *Shaddai El Chai, Gabriel,* and *Kerubim.* The archangel Gabriel formulates in the jasmine mists and addresses you.

"You have entered the realm of Maya and the Treasurehouse of Images. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?" she asks.

You answer: "By the symbol of the arrow." You hold up the implement. Gabriel leads you to the central altar where you don the violet astral sandals in preparation for your journey. She then takes you to a blue archway in the east of the temple. On the keystone of the arch is the letter Samekh in brilliant white. Within the archway is a veil on which is depicted the tarot card of *Temperance.* Gabriel traces the sigil of Sagittarius ?' and parts the veil, exposing a

door carved from jacinth. Holding up the arrow, you trace with it the letter Samekh O. The door opens and you commence your journey on the Twenty-fifth Path.

The path leads out into an open pasture. It is nighttime and the path is visible only because of the illumination provided by the full moon aboye. The stars are also visible as you begin to walk up the path. The voice of Gabriel echoes within your mind as she leaves you with these final words:

"Advance by the straight and narrow path of Sagittarius, like the arrow from the center of Qesheth, the bow, and as this path lieth between those of Scorpio, Death, and Capricornus, the Devil, so had Jesus to pass through the Wilderness, tempted by Satan."[2]

Aboye you is the constellation of Sagittarius, and you are reminded of the story of Chiron, the centaur, half-man and half-beast. Chiron was slain by Heracles with a poisoned arrow. In great pain from this incurable wound, Chiron begged Zeus to deprive him of immortality and end his suffering. The father of the gods granted his request and placed him among the stars. As you gaze at the figure of the centaur outlined in the stars, you envision the mighty Chiron drawing back his bow and firing an arrow which darts across the eastern sky like a comet.

You continue up the moonlit path. At length you come to a peculiar sight directly in the road ahead. The figure of a man lies sleeping on a pile of rocks under the stars. A little beyond him is a ladder set firmly into the road—its summit lost in the clouds. Magnificent winged figures clothed in dazzling white garments travel up and clown the ladder between heaven and earth. The angels pass each other by with a graceful rhythm. You realize that the sleeping figure is the Hebrew patriarch, Jacob, and the place you Nave come to is called *Beth-el,* or "the House of God."[3]

For a moment, the angelic procession between heaven and earth subsides. Taking this as a sign, you walk past the sleeping patriarch and begin to scale the ladder. As you ascend, you hear a voice that says: "Behold, I am with you, wherever you go, and I will never leave you."

Every step takes you higher into the clouds and brings you closer to a light aboye you. As you climb higher and higher, the

atmosphere around you increases in brightness. You feel yourself beginning to cast off your mundane concerns—all cares, worries, and attachments to the world below. You even feel yourself beginning to shed portions of your own outer personality, certain aspects of the intellect, the emotions, and especially, the ego. These drop away like so many discarded clothes. All things pertaining to senses fall back to the physical realm below. You press onward and upward, fully focused on the spiritual path before you.

As you reach the top of the ladder, the light is so brilliant that you cannot see anything. You are absorbed by the serenity of the light. Then, gradually, the light becomes less brilliant. It turns to gray and is slowly replaced by a darkness that is every bit as blinding.

Eventually your eyes adapt to the darkness, and you find yourself in a desolate landscape beneath a starless night sky. The air of the desert at night is still and cool. Ahead in the distance, you see the light of a campfire against the dark horizon. It draws you toward it like a moth.

As you approach, you see a man in his thirties sitting cross-legged by a small campfire in the center of a circle that has been drawn into the sand. The man, dressed in simple robes, has long brown hair and a short beard. But his eyes are what strike you the most—he has the kindest, yet saddest eyes you've ever seen. He holds out his hand in a greeting and bids you to enter his circle.

You enter the circle. Rising with a bowl of water, the man anoints your head, hands, and feet. "Except ye be born of water and the spirit," he says, "ye cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven." You close your eyes for a moment, reveling in the feeling of infinite and unconditional love flowing over you in waves. You open your eyes and realize that the man before you is Jesus of Nazareth; the one the ancients called *Yeheshuah,* the Son of God, and the Christos—the Anointed One.

He offers you a seat on a simple rug and returns to his seat on the other side of the fire. Although you didn't notice his aura before, you are now aovare of a slight golden glory that surrounds him. Aboye his head you notice what seems to be the faint image of a dove.

Yeheshuah explains that he has been sent to this place to be tested by the Accuser, Diabolos—the prosecuting angel of God's

heavenly court. In preparation for this, he has fasted for a month. His discipline, his focus, and his inner strength have made him ready for this test.

As if on cue, the figure of the Accuser rises up from the shadows on the outer rim of the circle. You are surprised to see that the prosecuting angel looks exactly like the man seated across from you. They could almost be twins. But the Accuser's eyes are less compassionate, and his aura is slightly darker.

The Accuser speaks to the Son of God. "Let us begin," he says.

"So mote it be," replies the Christos.

The Accuser walks slowly around the circumference of the circle, testing its strength. With a wave of his arm, the image of a banquet table filled with food appears, just beyond the edge of the circle. He turns his attention to Yeheshuah and speaks with an empathetic voice. "I know you're hungry. You've fasted for many weeks. You've made your point. Enough is enough." He waves his arm again, and the apparition of the banquet table vanishes. The dark angel picks up a rock and says, "If you're really the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into bread. Eat. Sustain your life."

Yeheshuah answers: "It is written that no one lives by bread alone, but by the word of God."

The scene before you vanishes. You and your two companions are now standing on a high mountaintop overlooking the roof of the world. The cold wind blows your hair and stings the skin on your face. The Accuser waves his hand and all the great cities of the world appear to surround the base of the mountain. The dark angel speaks to the Christos: "These earthly kingdoms are mine to give. 1 will gladly give you all these and the riches they contain, if you will venerate me. You could use your power and popularity to lead the Jewish nation in a noble rebellion against the Romans. You could establish a magnificent empire where you would be crowned as the new emperor to rule the people. It would be glorious and noble."

Yeheshuah sighs, shakes his head, and replies: "It is written, 'You shall reverence only the Lord your God.' I will create no earthly institution."

The scene changes again and you find yourself along with your two companions standing on the highest point of the great

temple of Solomon, overlooking the city of Jerusalem. It is morning, and below you, the people of the city are beginning to go about their business.

The Accuser takes the Christos by the arm and points to the busy street below. "If you're really the Son of God," he says, "how easy it would be to demonstrate your divine power and miraculous abilities! Why not jump off this rooftop? It is written that 'He will command his angels to protect you.' They will not let harm come to you. With all this power, you could easily establish your own spiritual kingdom here on this earth."

Yeheshuah shakes his head and answers: "It is written that you shall not put the Lord, your God to the test. 1 will not establish an earthly kingdom that would be divorced from the light of God. I will not use divine power in such a cavalier manner. I am sworn to the light. 1 will not become a tool of darkness."

The Accuser has failed in his endeavor to tempt Yeheshuah. The dark angel nods in acceptance and defeat, and then he vanishes. Jesus of Nazareth turns toward you and places a hand on your shoulder. He regards you with those enigmatic eyes. "You Nave chosen to walk a very difficult path," he tells you. "But it can be a fruitful one. A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, and a rotten tree does not bear good fruit. Are figs gathered from thorns, or grapes from thistles? Every tree is known by its fruits. Good will produce good and evil will produce evil. For the mouth speaks from a full heart."

The Son of God smiles at you. "God be with you," he says. He suddenly raises his hands in the air and claps them together loudly.

The scene changes in a flash of light, and you find yourself in the desert again, standing in the circle by the campfire. This time, you are alone. There is no sign of either the Christos or the Accuser.

As you stand gazing out into the darkness of the desert night, you feel something well up inside you. Whatever it is, it projects itself outside of your body and outside of the circle. You watch as a figure approaches the circle. As it reaches the circle's edge, you realize that you are facing a being who looks exactly like you. This is your Accuser, a reflection of yourself. The appearance of this being startles you, and you hold up the path symbol of the golden arrow and say: "In the divine name of *Elohim,* in the permutation of

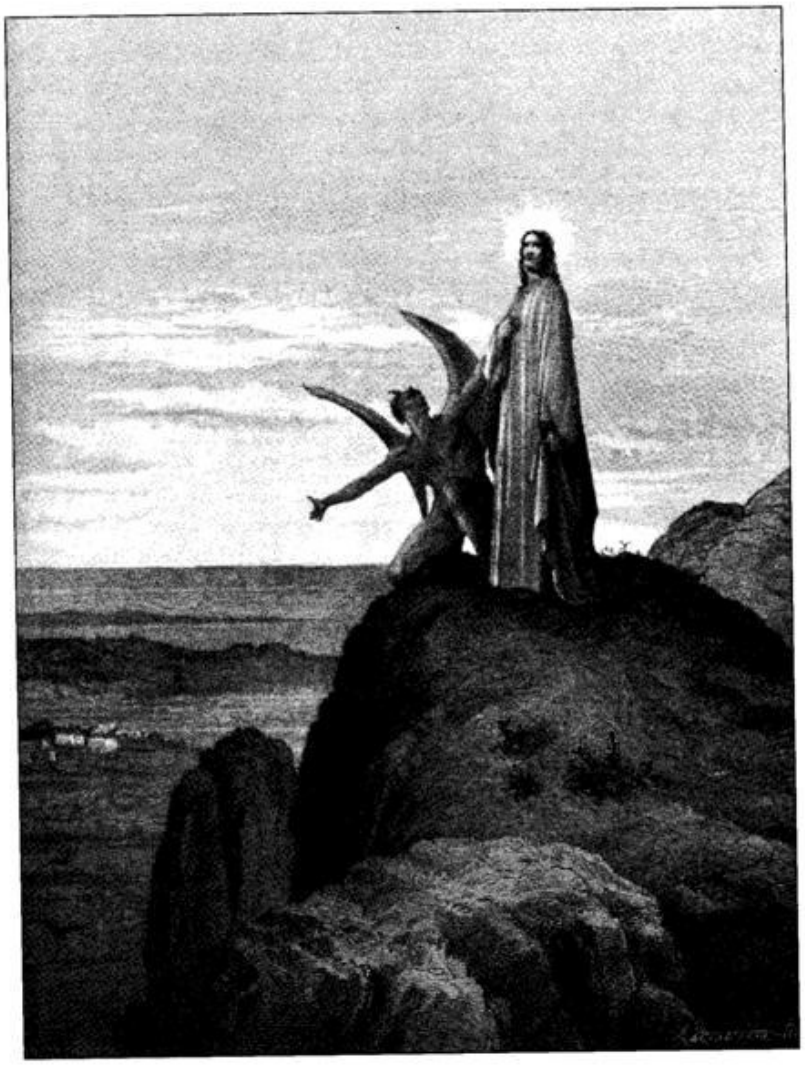


Figure 31: Christos and the Accuser

the holy name *Vav Yod Heh Heh* ,[4] and in the power of the Christos, leave this place!"

Your Accuser laughs. "You can't banish what is simply a reflection of yourself. I am a part of you. You have to *deal* with me before you can get *rid* of me."

The Accuser has a golden arrow similar to your own. He (she) throws it at you and it hits you full in the thigh. You drop to the ground in pain, gripping your leg.

Suddenly the wind picks up—a swift-moving thunderstorm has crept up on the desert like a thief. The rain begins to come down in sheets. Soon you are drenched to the bone and shivering in the desert night. You are wet, cold, weak, and in pain. For the first time in all your journeys on the Tree you begin to doubt your own abilities. And for the first time, a pathworking has become a true ordeal for you.

Your Accuser crouches down to speak to you: "You've had enough of this, haven't you? You've gotten pretty far up the Tree. Farther than most. But you must know it's time to stop nowyou 're through with pathworkings. You have far too many faults to be considered a sturdy vehicle for the divine spirit. Too many sins, too many lies. You have hurt too many people. You have far too much pride and ego. Too many petty wants and desires. You have neither the power nor the purity of the Christos. Give up this spiritual quest. You're just not cut out for it.

"What has brought you to this point? Why have you traveled this far? Knowledge? You found knowledge back in Hod. Faith, hope, and the love of God have brought you to this place. What good are these props to you now? What good is your faith if you can't use it to prove spiritual truth? What is hope except a naive desire for wish-fulfillment? What has your love of God brought you except an arrow in the thigh in this godforsaken place? Leave now and you will be rewarded with a very comfortable secular life."

You are lying flat on your back with the rain hitting you full in the face and the blood from your wound slowly draining into the water. Pulling the arrow out of your thigh, you clutch it against your chest. You have no magic or power strong enough to defeat your Accuser, an opponent who knows your weaknesses better

than you do. All you have is your spiritual aspiration and the props that can sustain you on this path. All you have is your faith in what you believe to be good and true, your hope of spiritual attainment, and your love of the divine, which is your sole reason for beginning this quest in the first place. These things are all you have at this moment in time, and in your weakness you call on your Higher Self to get through this ordeal.

Then you hear a voice, perhaps the voice of the archangel Gabriel, which comforts you:

"Faith voids and darkens the intellect of all its human knowledge," says the voice, "and by doing so, prepares it for the union with the divine wisdom. Hope empties and alienates the memory from all creature possessions and sets it upon what it hopes to enjoy in the future. And this is why the hope of God alone can absolutely dispose the memory because of the vacuum it causes therein, to be united with the divine. In the same way does the love of God void and empty the affections and appetites of whatever is not God, and so this virtue prepares this faculty and unites it with God through love."[5]

The voice and its message has a calming effect on you. Closing your eyes, you shut everything out of your mind and contemplate the purity and perfection of the divine. With your whole heart and mind focused on the highest divine truth you believe in, you begin to recite the following prayer:

"I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, the same shall never die. I am the First and I am the Last. I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, 1 am alive for evermore, and hold the keys of hell and death.

"For I know that my Redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, No one cometh unto the Father save by me.

"1 am the Purified. I have passed through the gates of darkness unto the light. I have fought upon earth for good, and have now finished my work, and have entered into the invisible.

"I am the preparer of the Pathway, the Rescuer unto the Light. I am the Reconciler with the Ineffable, the Dweller of the Invisible. Let the White Brilliance of the Divine Spirit descend."[6]

You feel a warmth spreading through your veins as a brilliant light falls on your body. It evaporates the chill caused by the rain. You are not even aware of the rain anymore, but you are aware that your thigh no longer gives you pain. Reaching down, you feel the wound healing itself. Soon it is completely gone.

The storm clouds begin to disperse. In the east, the sun is just beginning to emerge, peeking out between the distant mountain tops. Dawn is coming.

You pull yourself to your feet, your strength returning. Picking up a flaming branch from the campfire in one hand and the bowl of water in the other, you regain your spiritual balance. Your Accuser stands just outside the circle. "Your offer is duly noted," you tell your dark twin, "but I am going to continue on my spiritual quest up the Tree of Life."

Your Accuser nods and says nothing, but fades back into the rapidly disappearing shadows of the night. The sun breaks over the eastern mountains. It has been a long dark night. But the night is over, and it is time to go home.

You leave the circle and descend Jacob's ladder. Soon you are back at the temple of Yesod. Gabriel welcomes you as you return the astral sandals to the foot of the silver altar. She guides you back to the temple of Malkuth and leaves you with Sandalphon, who closes the portal of Tau behind you. You take a moment to reflect on your experience. Finally, you bid Sandalphon farewell, saluting her with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.

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The Twenty-sixth Path of Ayin

> *The Twenty-sixth Path is called the Renewing Intelligence, because the Holy God renews by it all the changing things which are renewed by the creation of the world.*

The "Renewing Intelligence" implies reproduction, recreation, and rejuvenation. This is physical renewal as the divine life-force issues from Tiphareth into the form-building sphere of Hod. But it is also

the renovation of consciousness which, even as it undergoes the process of renewal, still maintains a fundamental composition that the student must strive to rise aboye.

The Hebrew letter Ayin means "eye." This refers both to the physical eyes and the invisible "third eye," and it points out the differences between outer mundane vision and true inner sight. Any slight-of-hand magician can demonstrate how easily the physical eyes can be deceived. True inner vision, on the other hand, cannot be so easily fooled. On this path, one must be careful not to confuse the outer corporeal form for the inward reality. Reproduction of physical form is attributed here, so it is on this path that the student can be deluded by the illusion of the material. Although the realm of matter is very important to the stability of the universe, appearances can be deceiving. Here the student must look beyond the mere form in Hod to perceive the Light of Tiphareth.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF AYIN

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Hod and continues on the Path of Ayin where he encounters the Greek god Pan. Along the way, he sees others who are stuck on the Path of Ayin. He learns how the monster Typhon imprisoned Zeus in a cavern, and he witnesses the rescue of Zeus by Pan and Hermes. *Path Emblem:* A glass eye

With your eyes closed you begin to formulate the astral temple of Malkuth. You intone the divine names of *Adonai ha-Aretz, Sandalphon,* and *Ashim.* The archangel Sandalphon appears and you exchange the usual signs. When she asks why you have come to her abode, you hold up the glass eye. The archangel escorts you quickly through the portal of Shin in the northeast of the temple and up the Thirty-first Path of Shin to the temple of Hod. Leaving Sandalphon, you enter the water temple giving the Projection Sign. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

The sight of the eight-sided temple, its walls draped in orange silk, never ceases to please your aesthetic senses. You enjoy seeing

the floor encrusted with fire opals in the shape of an octagon, the ceiling with its blue Mercury sigil, and the central blue altar on which is the temple flame, the chalice of water, and the leather-bound Book of Knowledge.

You announce your presence in the temple by vibrating the divine names which call forth its inhabitants: *Elohim Tzabaoth, Michael,* and *Beni Elohim.*

The archangel Michael appears, a mighty winged figure in robes of orange with a blue octagram emblazoned on his chest. He questions you:

"Behold the abode of the Perfect Intelligence and the reasoning mind. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer, holding up the symbol: "By the symbol of the eye."

Satisfied, Michael takes you to the northwest of the temple and draws back a portion of the orange drapery to reveal an indigo archway bearing a white letter Ayin on its keystone. Within the arch is a veil with the tarot image of *The Devil* painted on it. The archangel traces the symbol of Capricorn 1Cf in the air before the archway, and the veil fades into mist. In its place is a door carved out of baack diamond. Holding up the glass eye, you trace the letter Ayin 17 before the door, which dissolves. Stepping through the portal, you enter the Twenty-sixth Path.

You step out into an area of indigo mist which feels pregnant with energy. You hear the voice of Michael as he speaks to you:

"Labor to establish the pentagram within yourself, that it be the pentagram of good, upright and balanced, not the evil and reversed pentagram. It is written 'He descendeth into Hell.' But the whiteness aboye shines the brighter for the blackness which is beneath, and thus mayest thou comprehend that the evil helpeth forward the good." [7]

The mist clears and you find yourself in a dense forest of trees filled with the intermittent sounds of song birds and the rustling of small animals in the underbrush. A narrow, sandy trail, cut into the earth by human feet over the centuries, marks the Path of Ayin. As you walk, you hear music wafting though the trees. Some kind of pipe or flute off in the distance is sounding a playful melody. The air is warm and the sunlight filters through the trees, falling in patterns

on the footpath that winds its way through the woods. You continue on the path, which leads gradually up an incline. The forest borders on a mountainous slope, and the path you tread is gradually becoming steeper.

Without warning, there is a thrashing in the brushes near the trail in front of you. A dark figure leaps out at you with a bloodcurdling roar, and you almost fall backward from surprise. A frightful man-like creature with horns sticking out of his head towers over you. His bronze skin glistens in the sun. His dark legs are shaggy, and instead of feet he has the cloven hoofs of a goat. Again he roars and howls, stamping his feet like an enraged bull.

You hold up the glass eye and vibrate the narre of *Adonai* for protection against this demon. The creature looks at the symbol in your hand and doubles over with laughter. He has to hold himself up by leaning against a tree. "You should see the look on your face!" he says, trying to suppress his laughter. You are confused by this bizarre creature who holds out his hand to help you up. "You look as though you 've just seen the Devil himself!" he chuckles. "Sorry if I startled you! I find it amusing to give lonely travelers a fright. No devil. Just poor old Pan! People are always confusing me with someone else. Must be my devilish good looks!" He runs his hand through his beard and throws back his head with a hearty grunt and pulls you to your feet.

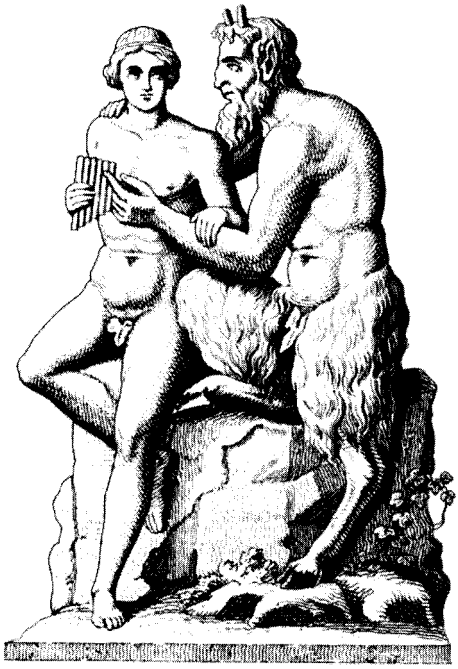


Figure 32: Pan

You realize that the fig-

ure before you is Pan, the Greek god of flocks and forests, of fields, woods, and shepherds, and of nature and fertility. According to some

mythologists of the school of Alexandria, the great Pan was considered the universal god, "the Great All." He is regarded by some as a lower form of Zeus and a controlling spirit of the lower worlds and of natural energy. He stands on the road before you with the pastoral staff of authority, holding the seven-reeded pan-pipe said to symbolize the harmony of the seven planets. The sacred dances created by Pan are reputed to symbolize the movements of the heavenly bodies. He is primarily a god of natural energy, regeneration, and life force. His upper body, being human, represents his higher divine essence, while his lower and more bestial extremities represent the forces of nature. His horns are a symbol of celestial radiation.

Pan points at the glass eye in your hand. "And that thing," he says with a hint of contempt. "What good is a jeweled eye for seeing?" Suddenly, he grabs the eye out of your hand and shatters it on the ground. This startles you. Never before has one of your path symbols been treated in such a fashion. Pan continues: "Can a jeweled eye help you see the underlying causes of things? Beware lest you mistake a god for a devil, or make a devil into a god, for things are not always as they appear." He places his finger to the middle of your forehead and says, "See with this eye instead."

The god turns toward the path and says, "Follow me if you want to see *a real* monster." You accompany Pan down the Twenty-sixth Path. The god takes up his syrinx, the seven-reeded pipe, and plays a haunting tune as you continue down the forest trail. After a while he asks if you have ever heard of the giants' revolt. Without waiting for your answer, Pan recites the story:

"Everyone remembers the story of how the mighty god Zeus and the Olympians, the gods of light, defeated the first race of beings, the Titans, in the great battle at the beginning of creation. Zeus imprisoned the Titans in Tartarus, the abysmal region of hell far below Hades where the ghosts of the dead twitter like bats. Well, the Titans were not the only ancient race born of the chthonic earth. Their brothers, the giants, were even more monstrous. Twenty-four in number, the giants were tall and terrible, with legs like serpents and serpent heads for feet. Equipped with glittering armor and spears, they attacked Olympus, hurling boulders and firebrands upward from their mountaintop stronghold. To reach the Olympians,

they piled the surrounding mountains one on top of the other, until at length they breached the abode of the gods. The gods themselves could do nothing, for Hera had prophesied that the giants could only be killed by a mortal possessed of a magical herb of invulnerability. Heracles—half-god, half-human—was this mortal savior, and once Heracles joined them, the Olympians engaged their enemies in battle. One by one, the giants were wounded by the gods and dispatched by Heracles. And that was the end of the giants.

"But Gaea, the earth, sought revenge against Zeus for the death of her children. She lay with the dreadful Tartarus to conceive a child. In the Coryian Cave she bore Tartatus a son—Typhon, a huge and terrible monster the likes of which have never been seen before or since. Taller than the tallest mountain, Typhon had the head of an ass and his thighs were a mass of twining serpents. A hundred dragon heads sprang from his shoulders. Fire flashed from his eyes and flaming rocks flew from his mouth. A true devil from hell if ever there was one!

"When Typhon flew over Olympus, his vast wings darkened the sky and the gods fled in terror. Only Athena, the goddess of wisdom, and the mighty Zeus stood their ground against the monster. Zeus threw a thunderbolt at Typhon and wounded him, but the monster got the upper hand when he twined his many coils around Zeus and cut the tendons of his hands and feet. Then Typhon dragged the helpless god deep into the Coryian Cave, where he remains chained to a rock to this very day."

Pan continues: "When divinity is imprisoned and gross matter rules, the balance and harmony of the natural universe is disrupted. And yet this is difficult for many to see. They subjugate the divine and exalt the mundane. See what has happened since that terrible day Typhon dragged the great Zeus away."

Ahead, you notice figures standing on either side of the road. One is a dark-haired man in an expensive suit reading a newspaper. The well-groomed man wears gold jewelry, but he has a very sour expression on his face. Pan points him out: "He has no time for his wife, his children, or his god. Money and power are his gods now. He is a slave to those things that were meant to serve him."

You pass by the first figure and see two others by the side of the road. One is a balding, middle-aged scientist. He is arguing with a young preacher. The scientist smokes a pipe while the preacher waves his hands in the air and shakes his fists at the other man. Each staunchly assails the other with his own opinions and beliefs. Pan laughs at them: "One claims that humanity's puny intellectual mind is the only god in the universe. The other would not recognize his god if he met him in the street. In fact, if he ever met his god face to face, he would probably condemn him as a heretic. Both of them miss the point completely."

The two men argue on as you pass by them. Then you come on another figure—a proud-looking man dressed in silk Egyptian-style robes and headdress complete with an outer layering of leopard and cobra skins. He stands inside a magic circle made of precious stones. Golden rings inscribed with magical sigils bejewel every one of his fingers. He gazes with great admiration at a gold-encrusted wand, which he bought in a far-away land for a very great price. Pan sneers at him with contempt: "That one fancies himself a magician and mystic, a great prophet for a new age. His downfall is spiritual pride. He is so full of himself that he mistakes the rantings of his own inflated ego for God. His magic has been corrupted into sorcery. I've heard it said that 'the power of evil magic exists but in the contest of unbalanced forces, which in the end, will destroy and ruin him, who hath subjugated himself thereto.'"

You pass by the magician, the last of the figures by the side of the road. "None of them are going anywhere," says Pan.

You walk on. There is something directly ahead of you. A magnificent, regal figure in white sits on a great throne in the middle of the path. He is a mature, fatherly-looking man with long white hair and beard. He holds a thunderbolt in one hand and a scepter in the other. On his head he wears a golden crown and a halo of glory surrounds his entire figure. This must be a very great and powerful god, you think to yourself. His presence fills you with awe. From his looks, he could be Zeus himself, Yahweh of the Hebrews, the Christian Father in Heaven, or El of the Canaanites.

But you have a feeling that something is not right, and you wish that you still had your path symbol with you. You decide to

take Pan's advice and observe the scene with your inner vision. Closing your eyes, you visualize the figure seated on the throne. But now, in your mind's eye, the figure seems flat and lifeless. The halo is gone. Pan confronts you as you open your eyes.

"Is this your idea of the Highest God?" Pan asks. "It is a mere image." Pan walks up to the figure and pushes against it with his finger. The image falls flat against the ground, and you discover that it is just a cardboard cutout with a painted figure on it. Pan elaborates:

"In the mind of humanity, God is conceptualized as the ideal of man. Thus the many races and civilizations project their own ethnic and cultural ideas of what God is. But pone of you has the slightest clue what 'God' is. Words like 'infinite' and 'ineffable' are the *only* words that you can use to describe the transcendent God, because these words indicate that you cannot comprehend the Ain Soph in any fashion. Be careful that you do not condemn the names, images, or symbols by which another may know his Highest God. Your names and images may be no better. Don 't be fooled by outward appearances."

You and your companion continue clown the path. At iength you come to a rocky hillside. Under a rock ledge in the hillside you see a gaping hole in the earth from which arises a foul-smelling steam. A lone figure stands at the entrance to the cavern. It is an old man dressed in dirty rags. He holds his hand out to you and begs for a scrap of food.

Your immediate response is to recoil in disgust, but you refrain from doing so. Instead, you close your eyes and reach out to the old man with your inner vision. In your mind's eye you see a golden figure surrounded by a halo. You open your eyes and find yourself standing before Hermes, the swift-footed messenger of the gods. He is sleek and athletic—the wings of his sandals and helmet glisten in the light of the Grecian sun, and his Caduceus wand glows with divine power. Pan greets his father Hermes with an affectionate hug. After welcoming his son, Hermes puts his hand on your shoulder, obviously pleased that you saw through his illusion, which was a test. He tells you about the task that lies ahead. The two gods plan to enter the Corycian Cave and rescue Zeus from Typhon's coils.

With some trepidation, you follow Hermes and Pan as they silently enter the cave's dark mouth. Disregarding the stinking air that issues from the cave, you and your companions advance with stealth. The halo of light that surrounds Hermes' wand illuminates the way. Gradually, you become aware of a sound—a low, regular rumbling. You are very close now.

The subterranean passage opens up into an enormous chamber, which stretches farther than you can see. The rumbling sound is the breathing of Typhon as he sleeps somewhere in the vast, black recesses of the cavern. As your eyes adjust to the light of the cave, you see a powerful figure chained to a large rock. Zeus is subdued but still powerful to look on, with a well-muscled body, thick hair and beard, and dark, intelligent eyes. The sinews of his hands and feet had been removed by Typhon, rendering the sky god helpless. A serpent-tailed monster guards the sinews, which are hidden under a bear skin.

It is then that Hermes and Pan launch their offensive. With the same bloodcurdling roar that surprised you earlier, Pan leaps clown into the rocky chamber, waving his arms like some demon from hell. The monstrous serpent guarding Zeus is startled and confused, and while it is distracted with Pan, Hermes skillfully extracts the sinews and places them on Zeus' limbs. In an instant, the mighty sky god is freed from his bonds, his strength renewed. With a roar, he splits open the ceiling of the cave that was formerly his prison, and flies up into the sunlit sky. Hermes and Pan follow, and you are carried up to the surface in their wake.

You find yourself in the forest again, some distance from the hole ripped open in the earth. Hermes and Pan are gone, their work apparently done for now. Overhead you see a magnificent sight—Zeus riding across the heavens in a fiery chariot pulled by winged horses. Beneath the chariot's wheels, storm clouds are forming, and you hear the slow rumble of thunder as the storm god readies himself for battle. Shouting a war cry, Zeus hurls a thunderbolt into the opening in the earth. There is an explosion underground, and the earth quakes beneath your feet.

A great inhuman roar of pain rips through the air as an enormous black shape pulls its great bulk out of the hole. Typhon,

wounded by Zeus' lightning, tries to flee the sky god's wrath. Even injured, Typhon is terrible to behold. He is as big as a mountain, and his head is like that of some infernal mule with a serpent head for a tongue. A hundred smaller dragon heads sprouting from the creature's shoulders writhe in pain and spit flames into the air. The lower part of his body is composed of huge, twining serpents—a mass of snakes which spills out onto the surface of the earth as Typhon pulís himself out of the ground. Vast bat-like wings unfold from his shoulders.

Zeus launches another thunderbolt and hits the monster directly on one wing, setting the limb on fire. With a scream Typhon leaps into the air, and flies off to the distant mountains with Zeus in hot pursuit. When you can no longer see them, you close your eyes to envision them with your inner sight. You Peed to see this battle to its conclusion.

In your mind's eye you see Typhon fleeing to Mt. Nysa where the Three Fates offer the monster fruit, which they said would heal his wounds, but in reality, doom him to certain death. The creature then flies to Mt. Haemus in Thrace, where he hurls whole mountains at his pursuer. Zeus deflects them with his thunderbolts and sends tons of earth and rock crashing back down on Typhon's head, wounding him severely. The monster flees to Sicily, where he is finally dispatched by the sky god who crushes him beneath Mt. Aetna. The mountain belches forth the sulphurous breath and fire of Typhon to this day.

You open your eyes to the bright, sunlit forest. Wisps of dandelion seeds float casually though the air, the whole forest seems lighter than it did before. You are almost certain that no evil demon will ever challenge the supremacy of Zeus again. Harmony reigns again. You are reminded of something that Michael told you at the beginning of your journey:

"Labor to establish the pentagram within yourself, that it be the pentagram of good, upright and balanced, not the evil and reversed pentagram. It is written 'He descendeth into Hell.' But the whiteness aboye shines the brighter for the blackness which is beneath, and thus mayest thou comprehend that the evil helpeth forward the good."[8]

Your journey on the Path of Ayin is at an end. You find yourself back at the water temple of Hod, where the archangel Michael seems relieved to see you back at his door. You suspect that he might have envisioned you permanently stuck on the Twenty-sixth Path just like the others you met along the side of the road. Thanking the archangel, you descend the Path of Shin to the temple of Malkuth.

Sandalphon seals the portal of the Thirty-first Path behind you. The Ashim appear very excited at your return. Their tufts of Yod-like fire soar high aboye the central altar and spiral down into the temple flame. You bid farewell to the inhabitants of Malkuth and salute with the Projection Sign. Sandalphon gives the Sign of Silence.



The Twenty-fourth Path of Nun

> *The Twenty-fourth Path is the Imaginative Intelligence, and it is so called because it gives a likeness to all the similitudes which are created in like manner similar to its harmonious elegancies.*

The Hebrew word *dimyoni,* "imaginative," is closely related to the word *dimyon,* which means "semblance, likeness." This passage indicates that by uniting opposites, a greater wholeness is achieved. A fresh synthesis arises that creates new versions of itself, all of which have a similarity or semblance to the "harmonious elegancies" of the divine life-force. "For the outward form always follows the Hidden Law, thus from Chaos is produced Harmony, just as a beautiful flower is produced from decaying matter."[9] The "Imaginative Intelligence" constantly creates new images that we may use to aid us in our spiritual quest, just as humanity itself was created in the "image" of the divine.

The Hebrew letter Nun means "fish," which is the object desired by the "fishhook" (Tzaddi / meditation). This letter is also associated with the ideas of water (consciousness) and the sun (the Christos as a solar deity symbolized by a fish). Nun also has correspondences with the ideas of generation and fecundity.

The Twenty-fourth Path leads from Netzach, the seat of the imaginative consciousness, to Tiphareth, the seat of the sun. It is therefore

the path of hidden energies that, when aroused, leads to increasing levels of illumination. Here the student begins to forgo the desires of Netzach for the more universal love of Tiphareth. The wants of the lower personality are forfeited for higher spiritual needs as the student's perceptions of reality and the purpose of life are constantly changing on this path. Outmoded ideas of the "self" evaporate as new self-images and "similitudes" form to replace them.

The task of the student on this path is to let go of the old and yield to that which is unfamiliar, trusting in the love of the divine.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF NUN

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Netzach and continues on the path of Nun where he meets Nephthys, the Egyptian goddess of darkness and death. Nephthys narrates the story of the murder of Osiris by Set. The student accompanies Nephthys and her sister Isis as they search for the dismembered body of Osiris and restore the god to life. *Path emblem: A* scarab O.

With your eyes closed you begin to formulate the astral temple of Malkuth. You intone the divine names of *Adonai ha-Aretz, Sandalphon,* and *Ashim.* Sandalphon appears and you exchange the Projection Sign and the Sign of Silence. When she asks why you have come to the temple of Malkuth, you hold up the scarab amulet. She escorts you quickly through the portal of Qoph in the southeast of the temple and up the Twenty-ninth Path of Qoph to the temple of Netzach. Leaving Sandalphon, you enter the fire temple giving the Projection Sign. Once inside you give the Sign of Silence.

The seven-sided temple draped in green silk meets your eyes. Once again you notice the ruby figure of a heptagram inlaid in the emerald ceiling. In the center of the heptagram is the symbol of Venus ♀. The central altar, surrounded by seven emerald columns, is also made of ruby. It is topped with roses and a sistrum.

You announce your presence in the temple by vibrating the divine names which call forth its inhabitants: *YHVH Tzabaoth, Haniel,* and *Elohim.*

The archangel Haniel appears, a winged, feminine figure in robes of green chiffon with a red heptagram emblazoned on her chest. She addresses you: "Behold the abode of the Imaginative Intelligence and the emotional mirad. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the symbol of the scarab."

Satisfied, Haniel takes you to the southwest of the temple and draws back a portion of the green drapery to reveal a blue-green archway bearing a white letter Nun on its keystone. Within the archway is a veil with the tarot image of *Death* painted on it. The archangel traces the symbol of Scorpio 111¸ in the air before the archway, and the veil fades into mist. In its place is a door carved out of snakestone. Holding up the scarab amulet, you trace the figure of the letter Nun] before the door, which dissolves. Stepping through the portal, you enter the Twenty-fourth Path.

A sunlit landscape greets you. You hear the voice of Haniel as she speaks to you: "From the center outwards, so moveth the point as it traceth the line and the cross. Equated and equilibrated lie the four elements if the body of Osiris Slain. May the corrosive cross return upon itself, from without inward, from the four quarters to the center, and become by sacrifice and transmutation, an offering acceptable, a body glorified."[10]

You find yourself standing by a river, the mighty Nile, flanked on either side by vast areas of fertile fields. Bare-chested peasants work the fields, walking behind simple plows pulled by oxen. The fields are crisscrossed by a grid of irrigation ditches. A well-tanned man stands on the riverbank near you using a device called a *shaduf,* a long, wooden pole balanced on a crossbeam, with a rope and bucket on one end and a heavy counterweight on the other. The man pulls on the rope to lower the bucket into the river. He uses the counterweight to raise the bucket and pour the water into the walled irrigation ditch.

The golden disk of the sun is high overhead, and its light is reflected off the smooth limestone edges of a pyramid in the distance. A path leads through the papyrus reeds that hug the riverbank, and you begin to walk along this trail, although tall river plants obscure much of your view. The trail winds and twists through the towering plants, but at length you come to an area where the plants have been

flattened to the ground in a large circle. The clearing is surrounded by the foliage. It seems to be a secret place, completely concealed from the outside world by thick river grasses.

Standing before you in the clearing is a radiant goddess with dark brown skin and hair, wearing robes of white. She wears a black nemyss surmounted by the symbol of a house and a basket. Two majestic wings adorn her graceful shoulders like two crescent moons. She is very beautiful and her brown eyes reveal a calm, passive exterior superimposed over a powerful interior mind. The figure stands before an ornate wooden chest or coffin. The lid of the chest is shattered and it appears to be empty. The figure speaks:

"1 am the lady of the house, the goddess Nephthys. Mistress of the gods. I am the sister of Isis, the queen of heaven and Osiris, the Justified One. I am the opposite of my sister Isis in every way. She is of light, 1 am of darkness. She is the goddess of life and birth, 1 am the goddess of death. She is the day, I am the night. And yet we are as inseparable as the two pillars. We are the two halves of one soul.

"My spouse is the evil god Set, the sworn enemy of Osiris. I am bound to Set by marriage, but my heart and my loyalty belong to Isis and Osiris. 1 aid and serve them to the best of my abilities.

"I am a friend to those who are deceased. 1 care for the dead in the underworld and 1 assist the dead when they rise to new life and resurrection from death."

The goddess then asks you why you Nave come to this place. You hold up the scarab amulet. The goddess continues.

"The beetle amulet is sacred to the sun gods who lend their protection to the one who possesses it. It is placed in the tombs of the dead as a symbol of rebirth in the afterlife.

"It is well that you possess this symbol, for this is a difficult path. Those who tread on it run the risk of disintegration. The key here is not death, for everything must die—the key is resurrection from death, and that is something that is earned through discipline and work, not through blind and passive acceptance of one's fate. If you wish to learn, then listen."

The dark goddess parts the wall of grass with her hand. Through this opening you see a great palace carved from sandstone which sprawls across a cliff overlooking the Nile. The edifice

of the building seems to flow directly out of the rocky hillside behind it. Numerous columns of varying shapes and arrangements are carefully integrated with dozens of statues and relief carvings of the gods. It is a marvel to look at.

"Behold the temple of Osiris, king of Abydos—god of the grain, and lord of all the earth," Nephthys declares. "It was here where the great god Osiris first established law and order over all of Egypt. And it was there that he was foully betrayed and murdered by my husband, Set."

Nephthys continues: "My brother Osiris was a great and avise king. The land of the Nile delta flourished under his rule like never before. He civilized the people and gave them a code of laws to live by. He taught them the arts of husbandry, and taught them the proper religious rites for honoring the gods. So good and gentle was Osiris! He was loved by foreigners as well as by the children of the Nile. Even the barbarians of other lands worshipped the very ground he walked on.

"While Osiris was away civilizing the people of distant lands, my sister, Isis, ruled in his stead. But my husband, Set, was extremely jealous of his brother, Osiris, and schemed of ways to take his throne. Unlike Osiris who was well-loved, Set, the god of the inhospitable desert, was feared by the people. While Osiris was known as "the beautiful," Set was despised for his looks, for he had the head of an ass-like beast with flattened ears, red hair, and pastywhite skin. In league with the queen of Ethiopia and seventy-two other conspirators, Set hatched a plan to kill Osiris. He ordered that an ornate wooden chest be made to fit Osiris' body exactly. When Osiris returned to Egypt in the twenty-eighth year of his reign, Set invited his brother, the king, to a great feast. Against the advice of Isis, Osiris attended the banquet, for the god of good feared no evil.

After the banquet, Set ordered the beautiful wooden chest, richly carved and ornamented with jewels, brought into the palace. Feigning a jest, my husband suggested that the chest should belong to whomever could fit into it. Several guests tried to climb into the chest but could not fit. At last, Osiris, unsuspecting of betrayal, laid down in the wooden box and it fit his body precisely. In an instant, Set's followers were on him. They nailed down the lid of the chest

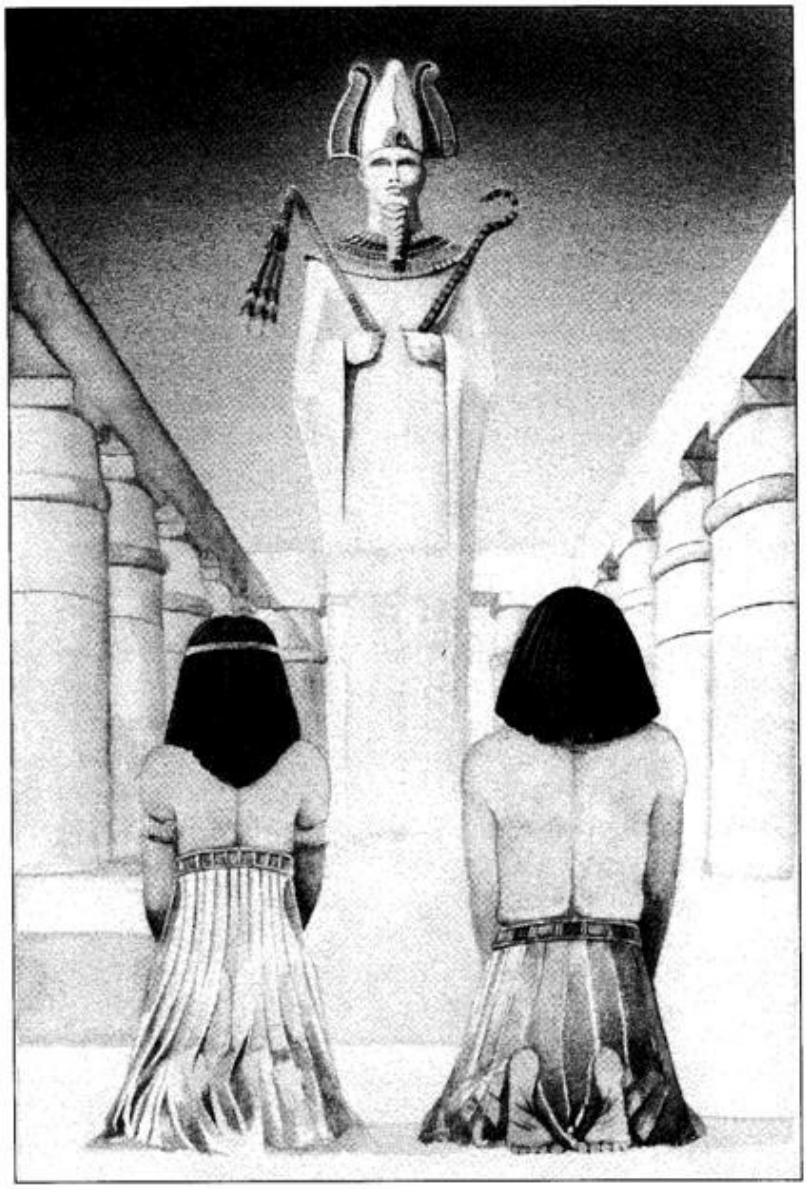


Figure 33: Osiris

and poured boiling lead over it to seal even the tiniest of openings. The elaborate chest had become the king's coffin, and wicked Set and his companions then took the chest from this place and cast it into the river where the Nile meets the sea.

"When my sister, the goddess Isis, heard of this tragedy, she was stricken with grief. She cut off a lock of her own hair and dressed herself in the black clothes of mourning. Well aware that the dead cannot rest until their bodies have had a proper burial, Isis set out to find the body of her dead husband. She searched up and down the length of the Nile, asking everyone she chanced upon whether or not they had seen the wooden chest. None were able to help her until she reached the delta where the river meets the sea. There she happened upon some children who told her where the chest had been cast into the river by Set.

"Consulting an Oracle, Isis discovered that the chest had washed ashore near the city of Byblos in Phoenicia. There it rested for a time amongst the branches of a tamarisk bush. The vitality of the divine body inside the chest caused the bush to grow rapidly into a mighty tree, which enclosed the coffin entirely within its trunk. King Melarthus, ruler of Byblos, and his wife, Queen Astarte, were impressed by the beauty of the magnificent tree. They ordered it cut down and brought to the palace where it was made into a pillar to support the palace roof. All the while, within the pillar was hidden the chest containing the body of Osiris.

"Disguising herself, Isis went to Byblos where she become nursemaid to one of the royal princes. One night, Queen Astarte interrupted Isis in the middle of a ceremony that would have given the young prince Maneros eternal life. The goddess then revealed her true identity to the astonished Queen and told the sorrowful story of her quest for the body of Osiris. Isis begged that the pillar that supported the palace roof might be given to her. Her request was granted and the pillar carefully removed. The goddess opened the pillar and removed the coffin that held the body of her beloved. Isis cried so loudly that one of the young princes died from terror. Then my sister took the coffin by sea back to Egypt.

"All the while Isis had searched for the body of Osiris, the evil god Set had assumed the throne of Egypt. Under his rule the people

suffered greatly. Misery and injustice became the law of the land. When Isis returned, the followers of Set pursued her, driving her to seek refuge in the swamps and papyrus reeds of the Nile delta.

"Isis carne to this very spot among the thick papyrus reeds to hide the chest containing the remains of her royal husband. And this is the chest that you see before you. But the thought of her child, Harpocrates—Horus the child—whom she had left in the city of Buto, weighed heavily on her mind. She left the coffin in this secret hiding place and went to find her son. But another tragedy would soon occur. See for yourself in the recent past."

Nephthys waves her hand in front of your face, and the scene in front of your eyes changes. You are standing in the same clearing, but it is now nighttime, and the goddess Nephthys is nowhere to be seen. The ornate chest is still there, but its lid is whole and unbroken. The full moon hangs in the sky, lending its illuminating rays down into the thick papyrus reeds. You become aware of a rustling sound. Someone or something is coming up the trail. Your sense of apprehension increases, and soon you see the source of the disturbance.

A creature emerges from the wall of grass. Standing upright like a man and wearing an Egyptian-style kilt, the being before you holds a hunting spear in his hand. His head is that of a strange beast with a curved snout. The ears atop his head are well pricked up, but the tips are curiously flattened. A mane of bright, red hair running from the top of his head to the nape of his neck stands in stark contrast to the pale, colorless skin. It is Set, the god of the destructive desert wind. Realizing that he has stumbled across Isis' chosen hiding spot, the Evil One grunts with satisfaction. Raising his spear, he smashes through the lid of the wooden chest and casts it aside. Lifting up the body of Osiris, he roars with delight as he tears the corpse to pieces with his bare hands. Then the god, maddened with hatred, flings each piece, fourteen in all, into the river to be devoured by crocodiles, depriving Osiris of eternal life. The pieces of Osiris are scattered like grain to the wind.

Witnessing this atrocity, you are momentarily lulled into a kind of passivity, as if your mind had been dulled or shocked by horror into a state of casual acceptance. It almost feels as if Set had flung pieces of *your* body into the Nile. Just then you feel someone shaking

your shoulder, telling you to come back. Instantly it is daylight again. You look up to see the darkly beautiful face of Nephthys. "1 thought 1 had lost you," she says., "Now you know what evil deed Set has committed. But now is not the time to give up your will and leave your fate in the hands of the gods. Listen, my sister comes."

You hear the sounds of someone coming up the path through the river grasses. The great goddess Isis comes forth into the clearing. Her form, clothed in robes of blue and white, is beautiful beyond description. She is the fair-skinned twin of her sister Nephthys. The lunar crescent and the solar disk surmount her golden headdress. When the goddess of heaven sees the empty wooden chest with its crushed lid, she cries out in a wail of sorrow that pierces you to the core. Nephthys informs her of Set's despicable deed.

"We must find all of my husband's remains and give him a proper burial," says Isis. "My son Horus will deal with Set at the appropriate time."

The two goddesses set out to find the body of Osiris, and you follow them. At the bank of the river, they climb into a sacred barquea ship made of papyrus reeds. You climb in also, and the ship sails down the Nile in search of the scattered fragments of the divine body.

For their part, the crocodiles of the Nile refused to eat the flesh of the god Osiris, and so the pieces of the body were carried by the waters of the river and cast up on the banks. Several days and nights pass, although time seems irrelevant as you and your companions proceed down the river. The watchful Isis, ever at the ship's bow, and the faithful Nephthys at the stern, both scan the shoreline for pieces of the body. The barque stops in several places wherever a piece of the corpse is discovered. In Hermopolis, two feet are found. In Sais, a hand. Other parts are found in Koptos and Hermopolis. In Heliopolis, Isis finds the head of Osiris—she caresses the head, weeping as she stares into the lifeless eyes of the god. The search continues from the wide river delta of Lower Egypt into the region of Upper Egypt, where more body parts are found near the southern city of Elephantine. Eventually, all the body parts, with the exception of the phallus, are found. Isis commands the barque to sail down the river to a secluded island. The

body of Osiris is then taken to a hill on the island where the work of embalming may continue in secrecy.

There in the center of a grove, the two goddesses reassemble the body of Osiris on a funeral bier. The bitter cries of sorrow emitted by Isis and Nephthys reach the heavens, where they touch the heart of Thoth, the great god of wisdom. Moved with compassion, Thoth and Anubis, the god of the dead, carne down to aid the sis-ter goddesses with the funeral rites. With Nephthys attending at the head of the bier and Isis at the foot, the work of embalming takes place. Anubis gently washes the divine body and perfumes it with sacred ointments. The internal organs are removed and placed into consecrated jars. Then the body is carefully wrapped in mummy-cloth. After the body has been properly embalmed, Anubis steps back. Thoth, the first high priest of magic, then begins a ceremony designed to bring Osiris back to life. The ibis-headed god raises his hands and recites an incantation in a language that is unfamiliar to you. When he finishes, Isis, her wings stretching over the feet of the body, begins the following prayer:

"Ah helpless one, asleep! Behold 1 have you, Oh great listless One. This is our brother. Come, let us lift up his head. Let us put an end to his woe, May the moisture begin to mount for this spirit!

"May the names of the rivers be created through you! Osiris, live! Let the great listless one arise! 1 am Isis, your beloved!"

The goddess Nephthys, her wings stretching over the head of the body, continues the prayer:

"I am Nephthys. It shall be that Horus will avenge you. It shall be that Thoth will protect you. Osiris, live! Let the great Listless One arise! Be completely restored! You will open the ways for the gods. You have confirmed your glory. Osiris, live! Let the great Listless One arise!"

At this point, the great goddess Isis transforms herself into a white bird. With her wings she fans air into the nostrils of Osiris, restoring his soul to life. A golden halo of light is seen shining around the body of the god. Then the goddess returns to her station at the foot of the bier and assumes her human form again. It is then that Osiris, filled with renewed life, raises himself up from the funeral bier. His skin has become green, the color of the living vegetation. His

aura shines like the glint of sunlight on a diamond. The sister goddesses bow to for he has been completely transformed from a god of the grain and a king of Egypt to a high god of resurrection and eternal life. He has become the greatest of the gods of Egypt, eternal and everlasting. Osiris, the Justified One, has become the primary cause of human resurrection, capable of giving life after death, because he himself attained it.

The god rises to his feet, holding the royal implements of the crook and scourge, the symbols of mercy and severity held in balance, and the Djed wand, the emblem of his own rebirth. The white *stenu* crown of Upper Egypt is on his head. Glowing with a renewed vitality, Osiris speaks to the assembly:

"I am he who was fallen and who was raised up. Whether 11ive or die, 1 am Osiris. I enter in and reappear through you. 1 cover the earth. 1 am not destroyed. 1 am the master of nature. 1 am the lord of life, triumphant over death. Mine is yesterday, 1 know tomorrow. 1 am the reconciler between the two lands. I have put an end to storm and confusion. I have put away anger. And I offer the prospect of eternal life. For I am Osiris triumphant, Even Osiris Onnophris the Justified One, I am he who is clothed in the body of flesh yet in whom is the spirit of the great gods. I am the Lord of Life, triumphant over death. Those who partake with me shall arise with me. 1 am the manifestor in matter of those whose abode is in the Invisible. 1 am purified. I stand upon the universe. I am its Reconciler with the eternal gods. 1 am the perfected one. And without me, the universe is not."[11]

The sight of Osiris in his restored glory fills your soul with a renewed sense of devotion to the work of magic. You are grateful for having been allowed to witness the transformation of Osiris, and it gives you a feeling of comfort to know that everyone who strives for spiritual renewal may accomplish it if they truly apply themselves to the discipline to the Great Work.

The resurrected Osiris continues to speak: "Death is a mere word, without any corresponding fact. Death means destruction, and nothing in the cosmos is destroyed. The cosmos is ever living and eternal. Long ago, when matter was not yet formed, it was in disorder. The bodies of the celestial gods keep without change that

order which God has assigned to them. But in living creatures, the process of growth and decay is a remnant of disorder. The death of terrestrial bodies involves the dissolution of their composition. They are then absorbed into those bodies that are immortal. When this takes place, consciousness ceases, but life is not destroyed.

"Speak not of man as perishing. Think what God is, and what the cosmos is, and what is meant by a living creature that is immortal, and a living creature that is dissolvable. The cosmos is made by God, and is contained in God. Man is made by the cosmos, and is contained in the cosmos. And it is God that is the author of all, encompasses all, and knits all things together."[12]

A bright light engulfs the gods assembled on the island. In one glorious flash they are gone, and you imagine that they have much to do in the coming days. Osiris must take his place in the Underworld to guide the souls of the deceased to new life. Horus must be raised to become a mighty warrior capable of defeating the evil Set. You contemplate the scene you have just witnessed and contemplate its ramifications in your own life. Gazing at the scarab amulet in your hand, you decide that it is time to return home.

Descending the Path of Nun, you arrive at the fire temple of Netzach. The graceful archangel Haniel greets you warmly. You thank her and descend the Path of Qoph to the temple of Malkuth.

Sealing the portal of the Qoph behind you, the archangel Sandalphon invites you to meditate for a while at the central temple flame. When you are finished you, salute her with Projection Signs. She answers with the Sign of Silence.



Tiphareth

Tiphareth is the sixth Sephirah and the sphere of beauty and harmony. This is the center of balance on the Tree of Life—the place of equilibrium that connects the higher levels of the Tree with the lower levels. It is therefore an essential conduit for passing energy and information to all levels and back again. It is the sphere of mediation and reconciliation. It is also the sphere of healing, illumination, true

peace, inner tranquility, and mystical experience. Tiphareth is the center of the so-called Christ consciousness, the mystical center of devotion and the Higher Self. The luminary of the sun, the source of life and light, is assigned to Tiphareth.

The *Sepher Yetzirah* says:

> *The Sixth Path is called the Mediating Intelligence, because in it are multiplied the influxes of the emanations, for it causes that influence to flow into all the reservoirs of the Blessings, with which these themselves are united.*

This again refers to Tiphareth's position on the central pillar, mediating between the pillars of mercy and severity. As a mediator, Tiphareth is also seen as a connecting link between higher and lower states of being—the Higher Self and the Lower Self. This sphere is a "two-way switch" that both receives the influxes of the emanations from aboye and "causes that influence to flow into all the reservoirs of the blessings." Tiphareth's neutral position on the central pillar, together with its androgynous nature, allows the influences to combine, multiply, and increase. The sixth sphere is the outward manifestation of the higher and subtler Sephiroth, as well as the spiritual principle behind the lower and more manifest spheres.

The spiritual experience that takes place in Tiphareth is the "Vision of the Harmony of Things." This is due to the fact that the Higher Self, or "Holy Guardian Angel," of every individual sits in Tiphareth (referring again to Tiphareth as the mirror of Kether or the Divine Self). The goal of all spiritual experience is the search for the light, and this is obtained by devotion to the Great Work.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO TIPHARETH

Summary: The student journeys from Malkuth to Yesod to Tiphareth, where he meets the archangel Raphael and the angels known as the Melekim, the "kings." He finds himself in an ancient Roman *Mithraeum* or sanctuary of Mithras, the invincible sun god. He has a vision of Mithras sacrificing the bull of heaven and restoring the balance of the cosmos. *Tiphareth emblem:* The rose cross .

Wearing the symbol of the rose cross on your breast, you enter the temple of Malkuth, giving the appropriate signs. Wasting little time, Sandalphon takes you up the Path of Tau to the temple of Yesod. From there the archangel Gabriel takes you quickly up the Twenty-fifth Path of Samekh.

You find yourself standing at the end of the blue Path of Samekh, facing the golden-yellow door to the astral temple of Tiphareth. Carved into this door is the Hebrew letter Tau r1 painted in violet. Giving the Projection Sign, you step through the door into Tiphareth. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

The temple of Tiphareth is a chamber with six sides. The walls of the room are covered with gossamer veils of yellow. The ceiling is made of pure gold—displaying a central hexagram carved from topaz. The floor of the chamber is engraved with a hexagram as well, and on each point of the hexagram is a large golden candlestick bearing a long tapered candle. The six smaller candle flames mirror the larger central flame that sits atop a golden altar in the middle of the temple. A six-squared cross is centered on the altar, and the entire room is scented with frankincense.

Seeking to announce your presence and call forth the inhabitants of this Sephirah, you vibrate the divine name *YHVH Eloah ve-Daath* and the name of the archangel *Raphael.* Then you call on the order of angels known as the *Melekim.*

A slight breeze stirs the candle flames and the veils in the east of the sanctuary. Materializing from clouds of incense, an angelic figure faces you across the altar. It is a tall, slim, masculine being—youthful in appearance, with fair hair and eyes. He wears robes of yellow displaying a violet hexagram on the breast. Great wings of gold and violet feathers rest on his slender shoulders. In his right hand he carries a Lotus wand. Raphael, the "healer of god," regards you with eyes that express his kindness and his strength. He addresses you:

"You have entered the realm of God made manifest in the Mind. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the symbol of the rose cross, which I wear upon my breast."

Raphael responds: "The rose cross complements the six-squared cross of Tiphareth, which is an opened-out form of the

cube of matter. The calvary cross is an image of the Reconciler who descended into Malkuth and paved the way for the path of return—he who was unfolded in the light. The rose cross is a symbol of the Way-shower, who remained unmanifest, maintaining a perfect pattern of what humanity should be, untouched by corruption and imbalance. It is a worthy symbol for realm of beauty."

Facing the archangel across the golden altar, Raphael directs your attention to the temple flame burning brightly in a bowl carved from yellow diamond. The flame fiares suddenly, and the room around you becomes translucent. The sanctuary fades from view. It is replaced by a swirling mass of white clouds. Against the backdrop of clouds, an image comes into view. It is the Tree of Life. You hear the voice of Raphael as he recites the following prayer:

"From thine hand, Oh Adonai, cometh all good. The characters of Nature with thy fingers thou hast traced; but none can read them unless he hath been taught in thy school. Therefore, even as servants look unto the hands of their masters, and handmaidens unto their mistresses, even so our eyes look unto thee, for thou alone art our help."[13]

The vision of the Tree of Life draws you in—it seems to grow larger, until all you see is the golden orb of Tiphareth which draws you in.

There is a flash of golden light, and then your eyes adjust to your surroundings. You are standing in the middle of the ruins of a stone fortress. Standing on the ramparts aboye you are winged figures. They are dressed in yellow robes covered by cloaks of purple. Each of them wears a crown on their head. They surround you on all four sides.

One of their number descends from the stone wall and approaches you. Never have you seen a more regal-looking figure—he has long, golden hair, a short, neatly trimmed beard, and eyes of the deepest blue. His purple cloak is garnished with ermine, and a jeweled cross hangs from his neck. He carries an air of royalty about him, and you could well imagine him holding court in a some medieval palace. He speaks to you in a familiar voice, and you recognize him as the archangel of Tiphareth in his

persona as *Raphael Melekael,* ruler of the angelic host of the sixth Sephirah. Raphael speaks:

"We are the Melekim, the Kings, the order of angels associated with the sphere of Tiphareth. We are keepers of equilibrium in the universe. We are the Lords of Pivot, constantly forming strong centers around which all the systems and paradigms of the universe revolve. Everything in the cosmos exists because of an interplay between opposites, and we provide the nucleus around which the opposing forces dance eternally. Day and Night. Male and Female. Mercy and Severity. These represent the continuous duality in nature, those forces whose reconciliation is the key of life, and whose separation is evil and death. We strike the balance between these forces. Unbalanced power is the ebbing away of life. Unbalanced Mercy is weakness and the fading out of the will. Unbalanced severity is cruelty and the bareness of mirad. The middle way is the way of balance. For while the wheel revolves, the hub is still. Seek ever then the center. Look from without to within."[14]

Raphael continues: "The Melakim are the providers of knowledge and experience. We supply the connection to the many levels of the Tree, from highest to lowest. We aid in the transmission of wisdom from the heights of Kether to the depths of Yesod, which reflects our influence to Malkuth. We facilitate true self-knowledge and self-understanding. To those who aspire to the Great Work, we provide unconditional love and respect. We bestow the gifts of harmony and self-esteem, and we lead initiates to the realization of their true calling in life. We are also healers—healing the wounds, both physical and spiritual, of humanity. We heal all afflictions and turn the experience of suffering finto spiritual wisdom."

Raphael points to the rose cross symbol on your breast: "The symbol of suffering is the symbol of strength. Despise not sadness, and bate not suffering, for they are the Initiators of the heart."[15]

The Melekim and the old stone fortress they stand on fade from sight in a swirl of yellow mist. You find yourself standing in an underground chamber. It is long narrow room with a central aisle flanked on both sides by a broad, raised bench. The ceiling is rounded and painted like the night sky, filled with stars and the constellations of the zodiac. The walls of the chamber are decorated with frescoes,

reliefs, and statues of deities inside wall niches. One long band containing frescoes of the zodiacal signs extends from the northeast corner of the hall to the southwest comer. Another band of frescoes containing images of the planets extends from the northwest to the southeast. Both bands cross in the center of the ceiling. In the east there is a large fresco depicting a figure holding a struggling bull. Surrounding this are smaller paintings. You realize that you are inside an ancient Roman Mithraeum, or sanctuary of Mithras, the lord of light adopted by the Roman soldiery from the Persians.

Mithras is a savior god, hailed by the Romans as a god of kings and friend to humanity. His narre is based on an Indo-European word meaning "friend." Mithras reconciles between Ahura-Mazda, the god of light, and Ahriman, the god of darkness—he maintains the balance between them. Fighting on the side of Ahura-Mazda, Mithras makes certain that darkness does not overwhelm the light. He also reconciles between human beings, binding them to remain true to their word and honor in all responsibilities, oaths, and obligations. Mithras is a god of ethical conduct, truth, justice, and discipline, who bestows favors on the virtuous and punishments on the wicked. Yet he is a compassionate god who forgives those who are truly repentant for their transgressions and failings. He is savior god because his sacrifice of the heavenly bull allows souls to be born into this world, and his final ascension into heaven shows humanity the way of the soul's return through the seven spheres back to the eternal realm of the fixed stars.

Two skylights at either end of the chamber provide illumination. There are also torches embedded in the walls. The temple resembles a cave or crypt, for although Mithras is a god of light, light is better appreciated in the confines of darkness. The sanctuary symbolizes the universe as a whole—it is a miniature version of the cosmic egg. It reminds you of another legendary crypt, the tomb of Christian Rosenkreutz (or C.R.C.), a seven-sided room with symbols covering each wall. Although the sun never shone in the tomb of C.R.C., it was illuminated by a higher sun. An inscription from the tomb of Christian Rosenkreutz comes to your mind: "1 have constructed this Tomb for myself as a Compendium of the Universal Unity."[16]

You notice some of the paintings on the walls. One of them depicts the birth of Mithras from a rock, a sacred stone cut without hands from a mountain. The rock splits open in a blaze of fire and light. The naked child Mithras emerges from the stone holding a dagger in one hand and sheaves of wheat in the other—symbols of severity and mercy. The birth of the child represents hope and the potential for the redemption of souls. Another painting shows Mithras firing an arrow at a rock, causing water to pour forth from the stone. Another painting shows Mithras as a king, the *kosmokrator,* or the ruler of the cosmos—Helios, the sun god, kneels in submission before him. From child to king, the heroic exploits of Mithras are documented on the walls of the temple.

Walking to the east of the temple, you examine the fresco of Mithras sacrificing a bull. You notice that there is a small room hidden behind the painted wall. You enter the chamber, which is



Figure 34: Mithras

no bigger than a closet, and discover a ladder with seven steps. Between the rungs of the ladder are the images of the seven planets, with Mercury at the bottom and Saturn at the top. At the top of the ladder you see daylight. Ascending the ladder, you find yourself gazing at the ancient city of Rome situated on seven hills overlooking the Tiber River. Pulling yourself aboye ground, you see the magnificent architecture of the Romans—palaces, temples, and governmental buildings, all built on the Greek model.

Turning your attention to the sky aboye, you are astonished to see a celestial event from eons past—a vision that fills the sky of the city. It is the mighty god Mithras himself astride the white bull of heaven. The god appears as a young man wearing the tunic and trousers of a Persian soldier. He has a star-speckled Phrygian cap on his head and his cape is the stellar vault of the sky. Rays of light emerge from his head like a halo as he holds the great bull down with one knee. You realize that you are witnessing a legendary event two thousand years before the birth of Christ.

In very ancient times, the sign of Taurus ruled the skies for a millennium—the first day of spring, the vernal equinox, occurred when the sun was in the sign of Taurus. But after two thousand years, the gods decided that a precession of the equinoxes was called for. The Age of Taurus was commanded to give way to the Age of Aries, when the vernal equinox would occur in the sign of the ram. Thus, every two thousand years hence, the first day of spring would occur in a different sign of the zodiac and no single astrological sign would be allowed to dominate the heavens indefinitely. The cycles of time would not be permitted to stagnate or fall out of balance, for the harmony of the universe was to be maintained.

Ahura-Mazda, the god of light, chose his champion, Mithras, to slay the bull of heaven and create the precession of the equinoxes. The heart of Mithras is heavy with regret, for he is fond of the noble animal. It is a great sacrifice for the god to slay the beast he loves so dearly. Carrying out his painful task, Mithras pins the mighty beast down with his knee, and turns his head away as he plunges his sword into the shoulder of the bull. He does not want to see the creature die. The wounded animal lets out a brief bellow of pain before it drops its head in death. The bull's blood pours out and forms the

course of the Milky Way. This is the starry path that is traversed by newborn souls as they enter into this world. It is also the celestial pathway that souls must travel back on to the eternal source of the universe. The spilt blood becomes the pathway of rebirth and salvation.

The vision of Mithras and the bull fades from view and is replaced by the starry image of the Milky Way against the vast backdrop of space. As you gaze on this celestial scene, you hear the voice of Mithras echoing through the cosmos:

"1 am *Mithras Deus Sol Invictus.* Mithras, god of the unconquered sun, behind Helios, the conquered sun. I am the sun beyond the sun. 1 am Kosmokrater, ruler of the cosmos. 1 am the Logos, virgin-born Wisdom. The Holy Word most glorious. Born of a stone cut without hands, Son of the Most High. God of kings, and friend to the righteous. I am the Mediator between the two powers of good and evil, light and darkness. 1 am lord of the contract and the sacred trust, upholding all oaths and obligations.1 am a god of generation, And 1 prepare the way for immortality, the transmutation of rebirth, by sacrifice, by the shedding of the eternity-giving blood. 1 am the symbol of the living god beyond decay. 1 am the deathless spirit, the incorruptible holy breath, which proclaims the Oracle of Soul of the Universe.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.' 1 am the transcendent Good. Verily, my initiates are born out of the state of birth-and-death, that giveth birth to mortal lives. Set free, they pass to the state transcending birth, as I have established it, according to what 1 have ordained and made the mystery."

The voice of the invincible sun god confirmes: "This sphere is the heart and center of the Tree of Life. The halfway point between the one ultimate unity and the countless diversity of the mundane world. Tiphareth is the midpoint between the human and the divine—between the individual self and the universal self. The sixth Sephirah is a gate between the personal and the infinite, between the child and king. All savior gods are models for self realization. They are archetypal beings who have made the transition from the individual to the infinite and who have opened up pathways between

the highest and lowest levels of the self. They provide a gateway for others to do the same.

"And this gateway is the door to spiritual rebirth, when all ignorance has been driven out. The torments of darkness have flown away with rushing wings. When a person is born again, it is no longer the body of three dimensions that he perceives, but the incorporeal. He is born again in mind. Remember that things divine are not attained by mortals who understand the body alone, for only those who are lightly armed can attain the summit.[17]

"Beware the vice of spiritual pridé. Study well the great arcanum of the proper equilibrium of Severity and Mercy, for either unbalanced is not good. Unbalanced Severity is cruelty and oppression. Unbalanced Mercy is but weakness and would permit evil to exist unchecked—thus making itself the accomplice of that evil.[18]

"Do not fall frito the trap of religious fanaticism. Insights gained from your own personal rebirth are intended for you alone. They are not to be forced on others, for such sacred experiences become the toxic fruits of one's own ego when shoved down the throat of another who has not experienced the same for himself. Remember that the truly wise person is but little in his own eyes, however great his attainments, and that even the highest intellectual achievements are as nothing in the eyes of the Lord of the Universe, for he looketh at the heart."[19]

The vision of the Milky Way disappears and you are once again looking out over the buildings and hills of Rome. On a nearby hillside, you see something you didn't notice before. Someone has carefully erected a small wooden cross, the emblem of another savior god that has taken up residence in Rome. The new mystery religions of transcendence and resurrection are gaining popularity in the ancient world. You have little time to ponder this fact, for in a flash of light the scene vanishes.

You find yourself once again in the astral temple of Tiphareth, facing the archangel Raphael across the altar. No longer dressed in the regalia of a king but in a simple yellow robe, Raphael greets you with a tender pat on the shoulder. He gives you a few moments to adjust to your surroundings. You thank the archangel of healing for this glimpse of the mysteries of Tiphareth.

You quickly return, following the blue Path of Samekh from Tiphareth to Yesod. Then, descending the Path of Tau to the temple of Malkuth, where Sandalphon greets you warmly. Facing the por-tal through which you first entered at the start of your journey, you give the Projection Sign and pass through it. On the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.



The Twenty-third Path of Mem

> *The Twenty-third Path is the Stable Intelligence, and it is so called because it has the virtue of consistency among all numerations.*

The "Stable Intelligence" denotes an attitude of stillness and fixed purpose. This path runs between the fiery sphere of Geburah and the watery realm of Hod. Hod expands while Geburah restricts. One could expect this to be a turbulent path, and indeed the idea of selfsacrifice that is associated here points out what pressures are involved. The opposing energies of the two spheres are forced into compliance with one another, resulting in unusual stability and "the virtue of consistency among all numerations" (the Sephiroth).

The Hebrew letter Mem means "water," a symbol of the universal consciousness, which is maternal and nourishing. The Twenty-third Path represents a "baptism" in the intuitive, feminine element of water—a kind of return to the stability of the eternal womb. Water is also the element that purifies and dissolves. Thus this path is one of intense transformation and purification—a purging of the influences of the outer and secular world.

On this path, the watery intellect of Hod is the vehicle for profound mental focus, while the fire of Geburah lends unwavering justice. The result is single-minded purpose and devotion that permits the student to become a purified vessel for divine truth.

On the Twenty-third Path, the student learns to sacrifice lower wants and desires for something nobler, higher, and more permanent.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF MEM

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Hod, and continues on the path of Mem, where he finds himself in the city of Jerusalem in the second century C.E. He encounters a couple who are retracing the steps of Christ's passion, or "the stations of the cross." He follows them to the hill of Golgotha (Calvary) where he has a vision of the crucifixion and is inspired to undertake his own personal process of self-sacrifice. *Path emblem: A* silver chalice .

Behind your closed eyelids, the astral temple of Malkuth begins to formulate. You intone the divine names of *Adonai ha-Aretz, Sandalphon,* and *Ashim.* Sandalphon emerges and you exchange the signs with her. When she asks why you have come to temple of Malkuth, you hold up the silver chalice. The archangel escorts you through the portal of Shin in the northeast of the temple and up the Thirty-first Path to the temple of Hod. Leaving Sandalphon, you enter the water temple giving the Projection Sign. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

The eight-sided temple draped in orange silk surrounds you. Reacquainting yourself with the temple, you take note of its decorthe floor encrusted with fire opals in the figure of an octagon, the ceiling with its blue Mercury sigil, and the central blue altar topped by the ever-burning flame, the chalice of water, and the leather-bound Book of Knowledge with the octagram adorning its cover.

You announce your presence in the temple by vibrating the divine names which call forth its inhabitants: *Elohim Tzabaoth, Michael,* and *Beni Elohim.*

The mighty archangel Michael appears, dressed in robes of orange with a blue octagram marked on the chest. He questions you: "You have the water temple of the lower realms of the Tree of Life. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You hold up the chalice, "By this symbol of the silver chalice."

Michael gives a nod of satisfaction, then addresses you: "In the courtyard of the Hebrew Tabernacle in the Wilderness, between the Altar of Burnt Offerings and the entrance to the Holy place, stood

the Laver of Brass wherein the priests washed before entering the Tabernacle. It was the symbol of the Waters of Creation. It is written, 'So therefore first, the priest who governs the works of fire must sprinkle with the lustral waters of the loud resounding sea.'"[20]

Michael takes you to the east of the temple and draws back a portion of the orange drapery to reveal a blue archway bearing a white letter Mem on its keystone. Within the arch is a veil with the tarot image of *The Hanged Man* painted on it. The archangel traces the water triangle *0* in the air before the archway, and the veil evaporates. In its place is a door carved out of aquamarine. Holding up the chalice, you trace the figure of the letter Mem D before the door, which dissolves. Stepping through the portal, you enter the Path of Mem. As you do so, you hear the voice of Michael as he speaks to you: "It is written: 'If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and deny himself, and follow me.'"[21]

You step out into a hilly hamlet in the middle of an ancient metropolis. The city of Jerusalem, the city of "the Foundation of God," sits as the shining jewel of ancient Israel, looking down across the Dead Sea to the east and the arid mountains of Moab to the west. To the north is the Judaean desert, and to the west is the coastal plain that meets the Mediterranean.

You find yourself walking down an unpaved street in what appears to be a residential area of the city. Many of the stone buildings date back to the age of Solomon, and you get the impression that this is an affluent neighborhood. Two Roman soldiers exit one of the buildings and pass you by without taking any interest in you whatsoever. It is then you realize that the city of Jerusalem is under Roman rule. Here and there you notice native Israelites passing by. Some are finely dressed, while others, not so-well-dressed, are obviously employed in the households of the Romans. Three women walk by, laughing shyly amongst themselves. Two laborers are fixing the stone steps of one of the houses. It is a typical day in Jerusalem around the year 200 C.E.

You see a man and a woman walking up the street. Something about them attracts your attention, even though to you they seem perfectly ordinary, dressed in the typical robes of the time. You follow them, but they seem to take no notice of you. Trying not to call

attention to themselves, they pause briefly near the entrance to one of the houses. They comment quietly to themselves, seemingly unaware that you overhear them. "This was once the house of Pontius Pilate, the governor of Judea," says the man to the woman. "It was here that our Lord was condemned to death." They both make the sign of the cross on themselves and continue down the street. You follow them.

Trailing after the couple, you pass into another area of town where there is a large communal hall. The couple stops again for a poignant pause. "The soldiers brought him here to the Praetorium," says the woman to the man. "It was here that he was beaten, given a crown of thorns, and made to take up his cross." Again they cross themselves and proceed down the street.

You continue to follow the pair as they move through the city, stopping periodically. They reverently point out different sites of interest, and you overhear many of their comments: "This is where he fell." "This is where another was made to bear the cross." "Here is where he fell again." Eventually, the couple leads you outside the city walls to a hill near a road. This is the hill of Golgotha, or the "hill of the skull." The Romans call it Calvary. This is a place of execution. Beams of wood are still scattered around the hillside.

The couple remain at this spot for some time. They kneel and pray fervently for a while, crossing themselves several times. Eventually, they continue up the road to visit other sacred sites. You remain at the hill, however, sitting down to meditate. After a few moments, a vision comes over you.

You see a crowd of people gathering. They beat and torment three men bearing heavy wooden crosses. The crowd is a diverse group of affluent and poor alike. There are also many Roman soldiers. One of the prisoners is singled out for particularly harsh treatment. Clothed in purple with a crown of thorns on his head, the man is subjected to blows on the head and scornful insults. Someone calls out in a mocking tone, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Another cries out, "Save yourself if you can!" The man at the center of the crowd reacts passively to the mob around him as he is ordered to set down the cross. He seems to be the only one there who is aware of your presence. He looks directly at you with sad but kind eyes, and you rec-

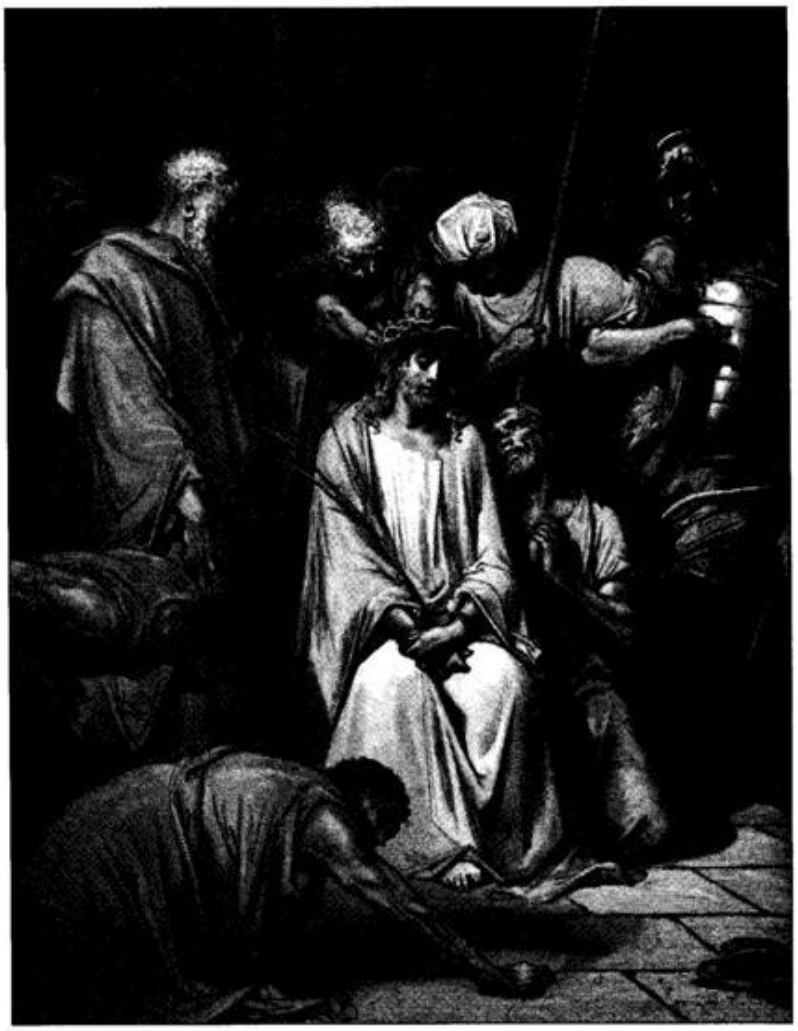


Figure 35: The Crown of Thorns

ognize him as the same man you met on the Twenty-fifth Path. It is Jesus of Nazareth, the Christos, the Anointed One, the Son of God-the one you know as *Yeheshuah.* The same god-man whose discipline helped you survive the long, dark night of the soul on the Path of Samekh is now at the mercy of an angry mob. Your heart goes out to him as he is knocked to the ground and kicked. For all the power that he possesses, he does not lift a finger to defend himself.

He is raised to his feet and stripped of the purple robe. Then he is shoved to the ground where his wrists and feet are cruelly nailed to the wooden cross. The two other captives are crucified as well. The Christos winces in pain. With ropes, the soldiers raise the cross and set it into place.

Hours seem to pass as minutes while the crowd continues to jeer and throw stones. "If you are truly the Son of God, then save yourself!" they shout. At one point, bruised and bleeding, Yeheshuah yells out in pain, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" After a few moments, he cries out to heaven, "Father, unto your hands I commit my spirit." He slumps forward and is still.

Suddenly, the crowd is dead silent. The mob is motionless, fixed like statues in various poses. Time seems to be suspended. Looking up at the cross, you no longer see the battered, bloody form of Jesus on the cross. In his place you see Yeheshuah, the Christos, revitalized as a radiant king dressed in robes of royalty and crowned with a golden crown. His arms are outstretched in the form of the Tau cross of life. A white halo of light surrounds his entire body. He seems to float just in front of the cross. It is a brilliant vision.

In your mind, you hear the voice of Yeheshuah speaking to you: "Those who aideth me in my suffering, the same shall partake with me in my rising. For it is written, 'If ye be crucified with Christ, ye shall also reign with him.'"[22]

You understand this to be the message of the Path of Mem. You must be willing to sacrifice for what you believe in. But what is sacrifice? It is more than simple charity or kindness to others. A real sacrifice means giving up something that is precious to you. And the ultimate sacrifice is the sacrifice of the self. It is voluntary forfeiture of the Lower Self.

Rising to your feet, you hold up the silver chalice and address the figure of the Christos: "I accept the bonds of suffering and self-sacrifice."[23]

Suddenly, there is a flash of light, and you find that you have taken the place of Christ on the cross. You are aware of pain throbbing through your head, hands, and feet. Looking at your right hand you see one of the spikes that pins you to the cross. Blood slowly drips from the wound. Your first instinct is to take back your words and say that there has been a terrible mistake, but an inner voice tells you to resist the urge and see this process through to its completion. The two other crucified prisoners are gone. The silver chalice lies at the foot of the cross.

The crowd below springs back to life. But now, instead of the citizens of ancient Jerusalem, you see people that you know: employers, parents, clergymen, co-workers, childhood peers, friends, and neighbors. Almost everyone you have ever known, from early childhood to the present day, is there. Some are people that you have never gotten along with. These are the ones in the crowd who continue to hurl stones and insults at you as you bleed on the cross. These are the ones who have always kicked you when you were down, so you are not surprised by their behavior now. But others in the crowd are more troubling to listen to. They beg and plead with you to save yourself, to leave your spiritual path and come down off the cross. "Come back home," they cry. "We want you back just as you were." "We don't want you to change." "Be one of us again." Others in the crowd take a more threatening approach. "Stop this nonsense and come down from there, right this instan-U" They shake their fists in anger, hurt, and desperation. "Are you nuts?" "If you don't come down from there, you're on your own. We'11 wash our hands of you!"

Your head aches and your arms feel as though they will pulí out of their sockets. Whether or not the figures in the crowd represent real people or are simply archetypes in your own mind, it doesn't matter. You have decided to sacrifice the Lower Self for the sake of union with the Higher Self. The sacrifice is great, but the rewards are even greater. The fact of the matter is, you couldn't turn back even if you tried. You have already been transformed by

your experiences on the Tree of Life. You Nave dared to venture on a difficult path that few will choose, much less understand. It is a lonely path, but those who truly care for you will not desert you. You speak to the Higher Self within you and say, "Forgive them, Adonai, for they don't know what they're doing."

Day turns to evening. With the coming of darkness the crowd gradually disperses. Soon you are all alone with only the light of three torches to see by. You are tired and in pain. Just thinking makes your head hurt. You don't know how much more of this you can take. Time has no meaning here. You know that whatever else happens to you, you stood your ground and saw your path through to the limits of your endurance—you never wavered from your spiritual goal. From somewhere deep within your soul, a prayer rises to your lips:

"Unto thee, Sole Wise, Sole Mighty, and Sole Eternal One, be praise and glory forever, who has permitted this aspirant to pene-trate thus far finto the sanctuary of thy mysteries. Not unto me but unto thy name be the glory. Let the influence of thy divine ones descend upon my head, and teach me the value of self-sacrifice, so that I shrink not in the hour of trial, but my name may be written on high, and my genius may stand in the presence of the Holy Ones, in that hour when the Son of Man is invoked before the Lord of Spirits and his name in the presence of the Ancient of Days."[24]

There is a clap of thunder, and it begins to rain. It is a gentle but steady rain, and the warm water relieves the pain from your wounds. You begin to feel regenerated as the Life returns to your weary limbs. It is pouring now, but each drop that falls on your skin is like a kiss. So much water fans from the heavens that soon the ground around the hill is covered with it. It is only a short while before the water reaches the bottom of the cross itself. The chalice on the ground below overflows with water.

It rains through the night but by morning the clouds disperse. There is a veritable sea of water surrounding the foot of the cross. The walls of Jerusalem are gone and an ocean stretches as far as you can see. The dawning sun on the horizon creates slivers of golden light that are refracted by the waves. A gentle, ocean breeze

ruffles your hair. You no longer feel pain, just a curious sense of detachment from your body. It is very peaceful.

Looking down, you see a figure under the surface of the water. It is the Christos, the Anointed one, looking as you last saw him, a stately figure wearing a golden crown. It pleases you to see him thus, Christ the King, a royal figure larger than life. A giant beneath the waves. He speaks to you in a gentle tone:

"There are three that bear witness on earth; the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood, and these three agree in one. It is written, 'Except ye be born of Water and the Spirit, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.'"[25]

Yeheshuah continues: "What is the reward of the Hanged Man? What can compensate for his sacrifice? I tell you now—just as the cup seeks the water, the sun seeks the moon, the bride seeks the bridegroom, and the king seeks a queen—the Hanged Man seeks the Shekinah, the holy presence of God. The reward of the Hanged Man is the *Hieros Gammos,* the mystical union. The meaning of sacrifice is to 'make holy.' The Lower Self is sacrificed for the higher and this causes the waters of Eden to flow down—the divine waters of pure consciousness are clear as crystal. When all thoughts are suspended and the intellect is disciplined by will, then the waters of creation flow down. They do not fail. They reflect the image of God, down even unto the Lower consciousness which receives a measure of holiness. Become like unto a living chalice, thirsty for the waters of life. Seek ever the sacred marriage, for no other union is as enduring, and no other water as sweet."

The image of Christ the King beneath the waves disappears. Then the ocean and the sky fade from your view.

You find yourself sitting on the ground on the hill of Golgotha outside the city walls of Jerusalem. A woman is handing you a cup of water. Somewhat disoriented, you take a long, cool drink. You recognize the woman as one of the two people you followed to this place. The man is there as well. "We saw you faint," he says. "We thought you were dead."

The woman pats your forehead with a cool, damp cloth. "This is a holy place," she says. "Years ago, our Lord died here. He sacrificed

himself for us all. He was resurrected and returned to heaven to sit at the right hand of God."

"Many who journey here are overcome by the power of this place," replies the man. "Consider yourself blessed."

You thank the couple for their kindness. They share some bread with you before returniiig to the city. It is time you returned home as well.

You leave the hill and descend the Path of Mem. Soon you are back at the temple of Hod. The archangel Michael welcomes you into the temple of the intellect. He accompanies you down the Path of Shin to the temple of Malkuth. In Malkuth you are greeted by Sandalphon, who closes the portal of Shin behind you. Bidding Sandalphon farewell, you salute her with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.



The Twenty-second Path of Lamed

The Twenty-second Path is the Faithful Intelligence, and it is so called because by it spiritual virtues are increased, and all dwellers on earth are nearly under its shadow.

The "Faithful Intelligence" relates this path to the concept of *amen*[26] or "faith." Amen also has the additional meanings of "so mote it be," "loyalty," and "steadfastness." Those who remain faithful or loyal to the will of the Eternal, benefit from this allegiance by receiving an increase in "spiritual virtues." They also receive divine protection by dwelling under the "shadow" of the Eternal. The Faithful Intelligence increases and dispenses the energies of the divine life-force in an equilibrated and just manner.

The Hebrew letter Lamed means "ox goad," a tool used to guide an ox in the proper direction and out of harm's way. By analogy, the divine life-force uses the energies of the Twenty-second Path to guide us and teach us what we are to learn on our quest. Sometimes the lessons students must learn are harsh but necessary.

The Sword of Justice always keeps us on the right path, ever moving forward in our spiritual progression.

This path, leading from the sphere of perfect equilibrium (Tiphareth) to that of severity (Geburah), maintains the balance of the entire Tree of Life. The challenge for students traveling this route is to educate themselves through the inner knowledge gained through meditative practice. They must put that knowledge to use and maintain their own sense of balance through the perpetual correction and regulation of thoughts and deeds. Prodded on toward the correct path by karma, the student must make an effort to retrain his thoughts and calibrate his actions to better reflect the grace and equilibrium of the divine.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF LAMED

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Yesod to Tiphareth, and continues on the Path of Lamed where he encounters an old woman who guides him across a river. Later, two Anubian guards permit him to enter a pyramid where he discovers the Hall of Judgment and the scales of Maat. The goddess Maat weighs the contents of his heart against her own feather, white he awaits the verdict of the Judgment. *Path emblem:* A white feather .

Behind your closed eyelids, the astral temple of Malkuth begins to formulate. You intone the divine names of *Adonai ha-Aretz, Sandalphon,* and *Ashim.* The archangel Sandalphon emerges and you exchange the usual signs. When she asks why you have come to the temple of Malkuth, you hold up the white feather. The archangel escorts you through the portal of Tau in the east of the temple and up the Thirty-second Path of Tau to the temple of Yesod. You announce your presence and are greeted by Gabriel who gives you the astral sandals. The archangel of Yesod accompanies you up the Path of Samekh to the temple of Tiphareth. You enter the temple with the Projection Sign. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

The simple beauty of the six-sided temple of Tiphareth is captivating. Gossamer veils of yellow spill down the walls, highlighting

the golden ceiling with its central hexagram carved from topaz. The hexagram on the floor is accented by six large golden candlesticks. The golden altar in the center of the room is graced with a luminous flame and a six-squared cross.

You call forth the inhabitants of this temple by vibrating the names *YHVH Eloah ve-Daath, Raphael,* and *Melekim.*

A sudden breeze animates the veils in the east of the sanctuary where the winged archangel Raphael materializes, looking as youthful as ever, and wearing robes of yellow with a violet hexagram on the front. He addresses you:

"Behold the sphere of beauty and equilibrium. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the symbol of the Feather of Truth." You hold up the white feather.

Satisfied, Raphael takes you northeast of the temple. Moving aside the yellow drapery, he reveals a green archway. On the keystone of the arch is the letter Lamed in brilliant white. Within the archway is a veil on which is depicted the tarot card of *Justice.* Raphael traces the sigil of Libra and parts the veil, exposing a door carved from emerald. Holding up the feather, you trace with it the letter Lamed 5. The door opens and you commence your journey on the Twenty-second Path.

The path leads out into a vide, sand-covered plateau, scattered with stunted trees and desert scrub. The sun looms large overhead. It has an angry red color that is both beautiful and ominous. The air is hot and stifling.

You hear the voice of Raphael speaking to you: "It is written, 'Arise and go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole.'"

You start down the path, which leads off to the northeast. The trail leads downhill to a lush river valley. You are not certain what river flows through this valley, but it seems smaller than the Nile. It occurs to you that it might be one of the Nile's tributaries. A herd of wildebeests grazes on the other side of the river.

Ahead on the path, you see what looks like an old woman, her head almost completely covered by a tattered green shawl. The woman walks slowly behind a white ox. She periodically gives the burly beast a tap on the backside with a long wooden pole to keep it

moving in the right direction. When she reaches a cliff overlooking the river, she stops the animal and sits down to rest on a rock near the end of fragile-looking rope and wood bridge that hangs precariously over the water. The ox decides to take the opportunity to graze.

As you approach her, you notice that the bridge isn't the only way across the river. The path splits into two routes—one path that leads to the rope-and-wood bridge, and another that leads down to the water's edge where a series of large, fiat rocks are conveniently placed for crossing the river.

You greet the old woman cordially. "The gods be with you," you tell her. "Walk in the ways of Maat," she replies. Then considering your options, you decide to forgo the fragile rope bridge and take the sturdy rock path across the river. You start down the path, but suddenly something strikes you sharply on the back of your shoulder. Your back throbbing with pain, you turn to see the old woman, holding her wooden staff. "That hurt," you tell her. "Why did you hit me?"

"You were about to take the wrong path," she tells you. "That way is very dangerous."

You look at the stone path across the river. The rocks of the path are wide and dry, and they are so close together that one could easily walk across the river without effort. The rope bridge, on the other hand, looks very precarious. It hangs at least twenty-five feet aboye the river. The ropes are old and frayed, and some have already broken. You shake your head. "That way looks lethal," you tell her.

"It is a difficult route," the woman concedes, "and it takes a good sense of balance to get across. But have faith in yourself and trust in the higher powers, and you will make it. At least you can see what obstacles you are up against. The easy path, on the other hand, can be fraught with hidden dangers that you do not expect." She points to the river.

On the river bank below you, a lone wildebeest, seeking to join the herd on the other side of the river, makes its way to the beginning of the rock path. Gingerly, it steps on the first rock and slowly works its way across the stones. The animal is a third of the way across the river when suddenly the head of a huge crocodile erupts from the water. The reptile grabs the hapless beast by the head and

whips it into the muddy water. There is a great splash of water, and then the drama is all over. The wildebeest didn't have a chance.

You are relieved that the old woman stopped you when she did, and you thank her for being concerned. She shakes her head and laughs. It is the first time that you get a good look at her face. "We have to cross farther up river. My old ox always wants to take this path," she says. "He doesn't know any better. But 1 keep him out of danger. 1 can't afford to lose old Montu!"

The two of you head up the path to the bridge. "Watch your step when you cross," the woman tells you. "Some of the wooden floor boards are fragile with age. Be light on your feet and keep a firm grip at all times. "Walk in the ways of Maat and you'11 be fine."

Gingerly, you start across the bridge, gripping the ropes firmly and testing the strength of each board before trusting your weight to it. When you get about a third of the way across, the bridge begins to swing back and forth. You have to work hard to maintain your equilibrium. Halfway across the bridge, you resist the urge to look down, knowing that it will only throw you off balance. Eventually, you make it all the way across. Relieved to reach the other side of the river, you wave back at the old woman, but she and the ox are nowhere to be seen.

Ahead on the path, but still some distance away, you see the outlines of what appear to be three huge pyramids. As you get closer, you see that the largest pyramid is an awesome structure whose apex reaches into the sky. Two smaller pyramids are on either side of the main one. You quicken your pace, intrigued by the possibility of exploring these structures.

As you approach the largest of the three pyramids constructed from enormous red-orange sandstones, its beauty becomes evident. You notice several hieroglyphs and relief sculptures carved into its surface. On either side of the main entrance are a pair of columns whose capitals are surmounted with sculpted lotus flowers. Before each column stands a gigantic muscular figure with the head of a jackal. Both figures are dressed in Egyptian garb. Their human bodies are covered by tunics, but their canine features, their black pointed ears and snouts, stick out beneath their nemysses. Both guardians are armed with spears.

As you approach the Anubian guards, they lunge forward with a growl, crossing their implements to block your advance. "Thou canst not enter the Hall of Judgment," they snarl, "unless thou canst tell our names."

"Anubis and Opowet," you answer. "Twin guardians of the Hall of the Goddess of Truth."

"In what signs and symbols do ye come?" they ask.

You answer, "In the Divine Name of YHVH, in the permutation of the name VAV HEH YOD HEH,[27] and in this symbol of the Feather of Truth."

The figures step back. The god Opowet traces the Sigil of Libra -(- in the air before you with his weapon. "In the Sign of the Scales," he says, "thou art purified."

The god Anubis traces the letter Lamed 5 before you. "In the letter of the cattle-prod and the symbol of Justice, Thou art consecrated. Pass Thou on."

Anubis leads you finto the pyramid while Opowet remains at the entranceway.

You enter the structure and find yourself in a great hall with a black-and-white tiled floor. Two great pillars, one black and one white, resembling the feet of two goddesses, dominate the hall. You recognize this chamber as the Hall of Dual Manifestation, the place of the Weighing of the Soul. It is a place of judgment where the souls of the deceased are brought to receive whatever reward or punishment is deemed justified by their actions in life. An enormous pair of scales are at the center of the temple.

Anubis takes his place by the center beam of the scales. It is his job to test their balance and watch over the proceedings. It is also his job to act as your protector, your "public defender," so to speak. Just beyond the scales, Thoth, the ibis-headed god of wisdom, acts as a scribe. He stands ready with a stylus and clay tablet to record the judgment. He also acts on behalf of the gods in the Hall.

Behind Thoth is a fierce-looking beast, which crouches menacingly in the shadows behind the altar—part hippopotamus, part leopard, and part crocodile. It is Ammut, the "Eater of the Dead." His red eyes flash at you, accompanied by a low rumbling growl and the sound of claws scraping the floor. Those souls who fail the

judgment and are declared to be false are devoured by the voracious Ammut. You have no desire to tangle with this monster.

Forty-two lesser gods sit stone-still along all sides of the room, observing you like silent sentinels.

But what strikes you the most in this hall is the goddess who stands directly before you in front of the scales. She is a tall, commanding figure, dressed in robes of the most vibrant green. She holds a Lotus wand and an ankh. A large white ostrich feather surmounts her headdress, tied into place by a thin band. The goddess regards you with dark eyes that suggest absolute calm and equipoise. She speaks to you in a quiet voice: "Walk always in the ways of Maat."

From the sound of her voice you realize that the old woman you met earlier, who kept you from straying off the path, was none other than the goddess Maat in disguise. Holding up the feather, you address the goddess:

"Beautiful One of the Feather of Truth! Goddess Maat! Holder of the Balances. I beseech thee to act upon my behalf. Aid me in this Hall of Judgment. I am a true and willing seeker of light and knowledge. My intentions are honest. 1 am ready to undergo test and trial. I wish to be purified and consecrated to the light. Grant that my heart is made MAAT! Grant that my will is made MAAT! Judge me fairly. Grant that this humble aspirant before you be not turned away from that resplendent light which resides in the east. Let my quest on the Tree of Life continue!"[28]

The goddess speaks to you: "1 will judge you fairly, for I am Maat the Just, Maat the Law, Maat the goddess of Truth. Mine is the rule of law and order. My way is the path of purification that leads back to the eternal source, for he who is the fountain of the Spirit of Man, carne not to break but to fulfill the Law. Mine is the way of righteous. Mine is the way of the holy. My path is straight and narrow—like the edge of the sword of judgment, which confers swift punishment on the wicked and bestows knighthood on the valiant warrior. My path can be severe yet compassionate, like the slap of an ox goad against the back of an animal straying off course. If you speak with a true voice and your actions have proven honorable, then you need not fear this terrible Hall."

With the strength of conviction, you step forward and face the assembly of gods to await the judgment.

The goddess Maat takes the white feather from you and holds it in her cupped hands. The feather turns into a piece of rose quartz shaped like a heart. The rose quartz heart is a symbol of all that you are—your experiences, your deeds, and your deepest spiritual aspirations. Maat places the jeweled heart into one end of the scales. She takes the ostrich feather from her headdress and places it into the other end of the scale to be weighed against the purity of your heart. Then the goddess of Truth assumes her throne before the scales. "Let the judgment begin," she says.

Thoth questions you with the determination of a prosecuting attorney. He asks you to describe all the symbols of the Hall in detail. Luckily you are familiar with these symbols from your studies, and you answer all questions to his satisfaction. The forty-two lesser gods each question you in turn:

"Hast thou given due thought to the body inhabited by thee?"

"Hast thou spoken unjustly in anger?"

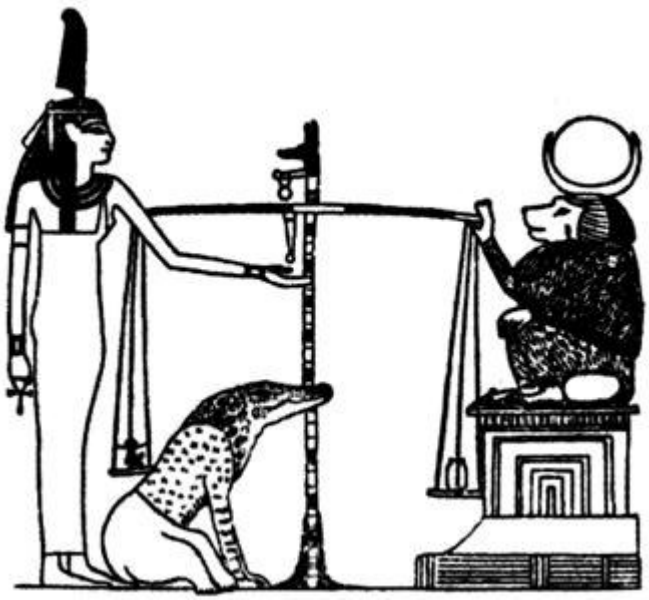


Figure 36: The Weighing of the Soul

"Hast thou been undiligent in work?"

"Hast thou lived in the light?"

"Hast thou faced the mirror of self?"

Their questions are hard, and the questions seem to go on forever. But you answer all the questions truthfully, to the best of your ability. You are even ashamed of some your own answers. You are asked if you have ever condemned another person unfairly or hurt another person through your own actions. You are interrogated about using your spiritual knowledge to exalt your own pride. You are questioned if you have ever cheated another out of something that was rightfully someone else's. You are asked if you have ever taken the easy way out of a problem, rather than taking the ethical or right way. The questions are grueling and uncomfortable, and you are sometimes forced to think long and hard before responding. But you answer all questions truthfully, as painful and as self-abasing as it is to do so. The gods already know everything there is to know about you, so it would be foolish to evade their questions. The confession you are making is a confession to yourself.

The scales of Maat tip out of balance, and the side with the stone heart is obviously heavier than the other. With every negative answer that tips the scale more in the direction of the heart, you feel your shoulder throb with pain where the old woman hit you with the ox goad.

At the end of their questioning, you are drained but relieved, as if the negative confession had unburdened your soul of all its private guilts and regrets.

Thoth records your answers and then asks you to defend yourself. "State your case," he tells you.

You address the gods collectively, summarizing all the positive deeds that you have done in your life—all those you have helped in their time of need, the times that you sacrificed for something higher, the many prayers that you have uttered to the eternal Spirit of the universe, and how you have endeavored to purified yourself for the Great Work. With every positive answer, the scales tip back in the direction of the feather, and the pain in your shoulder lessens.

Thoth beckons you forward and asks one final question: "Who is he whose pylons are of flame, whose walls are of living Uraei, and the flames of whose house are streams of water?"

"Osiris," you reply.

When you have finished, the scales remain evenly balanced. The goddess Maat gives an approving nod and then addresses you: "You have spoken truthfully, without evasion. I declare you *Maakheru,* justified and true of voice. Child of Maat, purified and consecrated, you may approach the shrine in the east." The goddess takes the rose quartz heart from the scales and returns it to you.

Anubis leads you past the devouring beast Ammut, who growls in disappointment at missing a meal. You are brought to a shrine in the eastern part of the Hall and instructed to kneel before an altar in front of the shrine. There on a throne sits the reborn god Osiris. He wears the tall, white *stenu* crown of the south flanked by two plumes. From his chip hangs the royal beard of authority and judgment, and he holds the Scourge of Severity, the Crook of Merey, and the Phoenix wand. The Children of Horus are at his feet and the goddesses of the two pillars, Isis and Nephthys, stand directly behind him. After witnessing his death on the Twentyfourth Path of Nun, you are overjoyed to see Osiris enthroned and radiant beyond all glory. In gratitude for being allowed to journey up the path of *Justice, you* place the rose quartz heart, the symbol of all that you are and all that you hope to become, on the altar before Osiris. He reaches out and touches the crown of your head with the Phoenix wand. The god speaks: "Thy meat shall be from the Infinite, and Thy drink from the Infinite. Thou art able to go forth to the initiatory feasts on earth, for thou hast overcome."

Your journey on the Twenty-second Path of Lamed is at an end, and it is time to go. You return to the temple of Tiphareth and descend the Path of Samekh to Yesod, continuing on down the Path of Tau to Malkuth. On entering the temple of Malkuth, Sandalphon seals the portal of Tau behind you. You bid her farewell and salute her with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.



Geburah

Geburah is the fifth Sephirah and the sphere of "severity" and "might." Other titles given to this sphere are "justice" and "fear." The severity of Geburah is the purging and purifying fire of God that burns away all that is obsolete and useless. It is a holy and cleansing fire. This sphere rules the forces of change, which destroys the old to make way for the new. The fifth Sephirah bestows great energy, force, initiative, courage, and critical judgment. Mars, the planet of war and great energy, is attributed to this sphere.

According to the *Sepher Yetzirah:*

> *The Fifth Path is called the Radical Intelligence, because it resembles the Unity, uniting itself to the Binah or Intelligence which emanates from the Primordial depths of Wisdom or Chokmah.*

The word "Radical" here implies basic or fundamental. Here the text tells us that Geburah, the "Radical Intelligence" resembles Unity (one of the titles of Kether). Geburah's dynamic action overflowing into the world of form bears a close relationship to the overflowing force of Kether, which is the source of all manifestation. In addition, "Unity" also implies the uniting of a new and distinct polarity in the spheres of Chesed and Geburah. Geburah "unites itself to the Binah," because it is the same restrictive feminine energy of Binah on a lower, more manifest leve!

Geburah is without a doubt the least understood and most feared Sephirah on the Tree. However, the natural order of the universe depends on the concept of keeping opposites in balance, thus the benevolence, mercy, and form-building functions of Chesed are now equilibrated by the harsh, destructive actions of the fifth sphere. Geburah's duty is to break down the form issued by Chesed and apply discipline in the manner of a purging fire. Any energy that makes its way down the Tree of Life into the material world must be tested and tempered by the opposites of mercy and severity. It must be cleansed in the fires of Geburah. All impurities must be burned away, just as the blade of a strong sword must be tested by the fires of the metalsmith's furnace. Only in this way can the energy be fashioned as a sturdy vehicle for manifestation. Geburah is the strong arm of God, commanding respect and burning away all that is use-

less or outmoded. The harsh, destructive action of this sphere is absolutely vital to further evolution. The energy of Geburah is not an evil force unless its essence spills over from justice to cruelty. Geburah is essentially a conciliatory power that restricts the merciful love of Chesed. Without the powerful force of Geburah, the mercies of Chesed would deteriorate into frivolity and weakness.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO GEBURAH

Summary: The student journeys from Malkuth, Yesod, and Tiphareth to Geburah, where he encounters the archangel Khamael and the angelic choir known as the Seraphim, the "Flaming Ones." He finds himself in ancient Egypt where he witnesses the great battle between Horus and Set. *Geburah emblem:* The pentagram .

Wearing the symbol of the pentagram around neck, you enter the temple of Malkuth, vibrating the appropriate divine names and giving the usual signs. You quickly ascend the Path of Tau to Yesod, and the Path of Samekh to Tiphareth before rising up the Path of Lamed and following it to its conclusion.

You find yourself standing at the end of the emerald green Path of Lamed, facing the door to the astral temple of Geburah. A large red door is before you. Carved into this door is the Hebrew letter Gimel painted in green. Giving the Projection Sign, you step through the door into Geburah. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

The temple of Geburah is shaped like a pentagon. The walls of the room are covered with red tapestries of medieval knights in various scenes—knights fighting on horseback, seated at a round table, swearing allegiance to king and country, and gathered around the image of a grail. The ceiling is made of pure ruby, ornamented with a central pentagram of emerald. The floor of the sanctuary is engraved with a green pentagram as well, and the temple flame burns very bright atop the red central altar. The chamber smells like tobacco.

Seeking to announce your presence and call forth the inhabitants of this Sephirah, you vibrate the divine name *Elohim Gibor* and the name of the archangel *Khamael.* Then you call on the order of angels known as the *Seraphim.*

Thick clouds of smoke billow up from an unseen source in the east of the sanctuary. An angelic figure materializes within the clouds to face you across the altar. It is a robust, masculine being, dressed from head to foot in red armor and chain mail. A green pentagram is emblazoned on his breastplate, and a green cape is pulled back over his shoulders. Enormous red and green wings outline his head like a halo. Long, red hair and a neatly-trimmed red beard frame his face. In his right hand he carries a great sword. Khamael, "he who sees God," regards you with red eyes that seem to bore right through your soul. He addresses you:

"You Nave entered the realm of the Radical Intelligence, the abode of severity and fear. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the symbol of the pentagram which 1 wear upon my breast."

Khamael responds: "The pentagram is a powerful emblem of Spirit which guides, unites, and dominates the other four elements. It is a worthy symbol for the realm of strength."

Facing the archangel across the altar, Khamael directs your attention to the temple flame burning brightly in a bowl carved from ruby. The flame fiares suddenly and the room around you becomes translucent. The temple fades from view. It is replaced by a swirling mass of red clouds. Against the backdrop of red clouds, an image comes into view—the Flaming Sword. You hear the voice of Khamael speaking to you:

"Be warned O vainglorious one. The Lord is a man of War; Lord of Armies is his name. It is written, 'The Voice of the Lord is powerful. The Voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The Voice of the Lord breaketh the Cedars of Lebanon. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. The Voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.'"[29]

The image of the Flaming Sword morphs into the image of a serpent coiled around a Tau cross. Then there is a flash of light and the image is gone. You find yourself standing in the middle of a vast desert. There is little vegetation of any kind and no visible source of water anywhere. There is only one thing that catches your attention—a metal pole with a "T"-shaped top has been shoved into the ground. Wrapped around the top of this

pole is a serpent made of brass. A peculiar item to find in the middle of the desert.

In the distant skies you notice what appears to be a dark cloud moving rapidly in your direction. As it draws near, you see that it is not a cloud, but rather a group of flying creatures. Several dozen of these creatures stop and hover just over your head. They look like serpents and are colored in every hue of the rainbow. One particularly large, red serpent flies near you. The creature has six wings and the entire length of its body is covered with eyes. When it speaks, you realize that it is the archangel of Geburah in his persona as *Khamael Seraphiel,* leader of the angelic host of the fifth Sephirah. Khamael speaks:

"We are the Seraphim, the Fiery Serpents, the Flaming Ones, the order of angels associated with the sphere of Geburah. We are the maintainers of discipline and the rewarders of dedication. Our work is to limit, to define, and to control. Limitation brings unity. We guard the extraordinary and dangerous mysteries concerning the nature of the Qlippoth. Our primary duty is one of purification, and we bestow the power of focused consciousness, which brings unity. It is also our duty to enforce the divine will. We are spirits of `tough love' who teach through pain—the great spiritual motivator. We do not expect you to fully understand or appreciate our methods, just as a child does not understand the reasoning behind a parent's methods of discipline and punishment. We are the guardians of the gates of the universe, and the guardians of this mystic sphere. We keep far removed the evil and unbalanced."

Suddenly, one of the Seraphim flies down and bites you on the shoulder. You drop to your knees in agony as the serpent's venom spreads through your body. Fighting back tears of pain, you watch in amazement as something begins to emerge from your wounda black cloud in the shape of a large spider pulls itself out of your shoulder, drops onto the ground, and begins to crawl away.

"That had to be banished," Khamael tells you, "before you could progress any further."

The bite wound on your shoulder quickly heals. Soon it is completely gone.

Khamael addresses you once more. "It is written, 'If the Pillar of Mercy were separated from that of Judgment, the Vault of the Temple would Fall.' Blessed are they who have entered into the place of Darkness, and out of the Shadow of Death, come forth alive. The sacrifice is complete. Let none resist the will of the gods!"

The Seraphim begin to roar like lions. It is a deafening sound that causes you to cover your ears with your hands. There is a blinding flash of light and the Seraphim are gone. You find yourself standing on an island in the middle of the Nile River delta. It is noon, and the sun in its strength is directly overhead—the heat of its rays beat down mercilessly on your skin.

To your right you see a mighty army of hawks, lions, and winged cobras. At their head is a magnificent god—Horus, the hawk-headed son of Osiris. His golden skin shines in the brilliant sunlight. The god stands in a chariot pulled by sphinxes, and he holds a great spear in his hand. The god is young but well muscled from years of training as a warrior. His black hawk's eyes stare coldly, without emotion, at his opponent on the other side of the island. He is well aware of his place and duty. He is here to fight—to avenge his father's death and restore justice and honor to the kingdom of Egypt.

To your left you see another army, headed by the evil god Set, lord of the howling desert wind. His skin is the color of sour milk, and his hair is the color of blood. After he murdered his brother Osiris, Set seized control of the throne. But Set is a cruel monarch, and under his rule, the people have suffered greatly. Now, overlooking the battlefield, Set's forked tail twitches with agitation. Set will stop at nothing to keep himself in power. With his camel-like snout, he snorts his contempt at the hawk-headed god.

Directly in front of you is an assembly of seated figures—a divine tribunal of gods who have gathered to settle the dispute between Horus and Set, the two rival claimants to the throne of Osiris. The gods Re, Atum, Khephra, Hathor, Neith, and Thoth are there, along with other gods. The tribunal will pass judgment and decide, once and for all, who is to be king over Egypt and assume the throne vacated when Osiris left the earthly realm to rule over the land of Amenti.

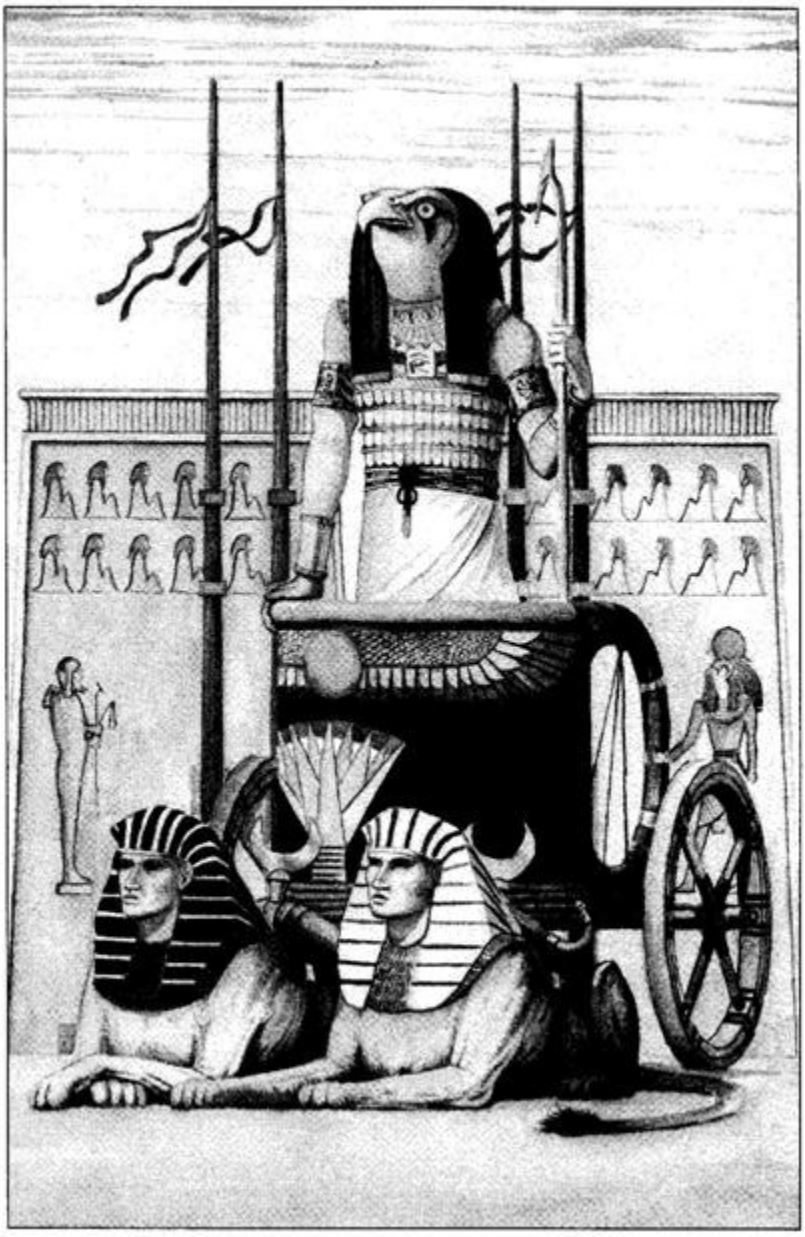


Figure 37: Horus

Isis and Nephthys are there as well. The great goddess Isis has not forgotten how her husband Osiris was foully betrayed and murdered by Set. She will do all she can to see that her son, Horus, the rightful heir to the throne of Egypt, is restored to power.

Various lesser gods plead the case of Horus to the tribunal. Other gods, followers of the evil one, implore the council to rule in Set's favor. But earlier, the clever Isis had tricked Set into admitting that a direct descendant of Osiris had a greater claim to the throne than anyone else. Weighing all the evidence, the tribunal confers the crown of Egypt on Horus, son of Osiris.

The evil god Set is enraged by this decision. He refuses to acknowledge the gods' judgment. Then and there he challenges the young god in hand-to-hand combat. Horus descends from his chariot to meet Set in battle. Set charges at him with a terrible cry of fury. When the two come together in the middle of the field, a crack of thunder is heard throughout the two Lands.

Set is a formidable opponent, but he has grown fat and lazy from years of uncontested rule over the land. Horus, though inexperienced in battle, is young and strong. The hawk-headed god soon has the upper hand. He wrestles Set to the ground. When he realizes that he cannot beat Horus in a fair fight, Set throws sand into Horus' eyes. Then the evil one tears out the eyes of the younger god and buries them. The goddess Hathor takes pity on the wounded Horus. She pours gazelle's milk into his eye sockets to restore his sight.

Set tries every deception he can think of to prevail against the son of Osiris. He even pretends to call a truce over a feast and suggests that he and Horus rule Egypt together. When his treachery is discovered, Horus returns the favor, making Set look foolish in front of the assembly of gods.

Then the great battle begins in earnest. The armies of Horus and Set rush forward to meet each other in combat. The struggle between the two gods rages on as well. The two combatants fight savagely; at one point they both transform themselves into bears, biting and swiping at each other's faces. When Horus' troops begin to rout the enemy, Set's followers desert him, turning themselves into crocodiles and hippopotami. They take to the water to flee. But

Horus and his followers have lances and chains made of iron. They slay Set's evil army of crocodiles and hippopotami in such numbers that the river Nile runs red with blood and the riverbank is covered with their bodies. The great god Horus changes himself into a lion and tears out the tongues of over a hundred of Set's companions, so that their lies will never again offend the ears of the gods.

The Evil One, seeing that the tide of battle is turning against him, also flees. But Set still has many followers who escape down the river, vowing to take vengeance on the sun god Re, the head of the divine tribunal, who cast judgment in favor of Horus.

The hawk-headed god enlists the powers of Thoth, the great god of magic, to help protect the ship of Re from his enemies. Then Horus takes to the sky and transforms himself into the great sun disk with magnificent wings outstretched on either side. He takes with him the two serpent goddesses, Nekhebet and Uatchit, the twin cobras. Then Horus flies into the heavens and casts his rays on the Nile with such power that the followers of Set are confused—they turn their weapons against one another, not knowing the difference between friend or foe. Many are slain. Those who remain begin to attack the ship of Re in their fury. But the army of Horus thrashes them with weapons of iron. Horus, in his guise as the winged sun disk, and armed with the burning rays of the midday sun, sets them ablaze with spears of light. The charred bodies of Set's evil creatures sink slowly under the waters of the Nile.

When Set sees the utter destruction of his companions, he cries out and curses with words of such foulness that the ears of all the gods are greatly offended. Then the mighty god Horus wounds the evil one with his glittering spear, pinning him to the ground by the neck. The hawk-headed victor silences Set's foul mouth with a blow to the jaw from his heavy club. In defeat and humiliation, Set is brought back to the tribunal in chains. Horus would have killed him then and there, but the assembly of gods rules against it. Set is not to be destroyed, but forever chained and held captive. His evil will be checked and controlled by the will of the gods whose ways are just and merciful.

After the judgment, Horus returned to the temple of his father Osiris to assume his rightful place as king of Egypt. Accompanied

by his mother Isis and her sister Nephthys, he is greeted by throngs of his followers. In victory, he is seated on the throne and takes up the scepter of power.

His praises are sung throughout the two lands of Egypt. You hear their joyful hymns:

"Hail Horus, defender of Re! Son of Osiris, born of divine Isis! Horus, that lifteth up his arm, Lord of reverence, who defies Set, who hath reduced the might of Set to silence. A warrior among gods, Avenger of Osiris, Protector of Egypt. The gods rejoice at the wise judgment of Re and Atum, who preceded over the divine council, who hath given his command to Horus, son of Isis, that he should govern Egypt, and that he rear and nourish the multitudes, with a strong arm to protect his people from evil, and keep them from harm. This is the Lord of the gods! This is the Lord of the Universe! This is he whom the winds fear. This is he who hast distinguished between the Just and the Unjust. This is he, who having made voice by his commandment is Lord of all things. King, ruler, and helper!"

From his throne, the hawk-headed one speaks: "I am he, the strong and immortal fire. 1 am he, the Truth. 1 am he who hates that evil should be wrought in the world. 1 am he that lighteneth and thundereth. 1 am he from whom is the shower of the Life of earth. 1 am he whose mouth ever flameth. I am he, the Begetter and Manifester unto the Light. I am he, the Grace of the World. The Heart Girt with a Serpent is my Name."[30]

The vision of Horus fades and you find yourself once again in the astral temple of Geburah, facing the archangel Khamael across the ruby altar. Khamael has resumed his human appearance, dressed in red armor. He addresses you:

"Remember well the lessons of this mystic sphere. Keep far removed the evil and the unbalanced, but always do so with justice, not malice. Avoid the extremes of elitism, oppression, and cruelty. Strengthen and inspire yourself so that you may preserve your soul and keep unsullied your abode of the Mysteries of the eternal gods. Let your sphere be pure and holy, so you may enter in and become a partaker of the secrets of the Light Divine."[31]

You thank the archangel Khamael for his insights into the fearsorne realm of Geburah. Then you quickly descend the green Path

of Lamed to Tiphareth. Taking the Path of Samekh, you descend to Yesod, and from there you traverse the Path of Tau into Malkuth. The archangel Sandalphon seals the door behind you. Facing the portal to the waking world, you give the Projection Sign and step through to the physical realm. Once you reach the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.



The Twenty-first Path of Kaph

> *The Twenty-first Path is the Intelligence of Conciliation and Reward, and is so called because it receives the divine influence which flows into it from its benediction upon all and each existence.*

This is a path that requires great exertion and true dedication to the spiritual quest. It is the road of aspiration that can only be tackled by dedicated students. The Yetziratic text implies that this path is something that is requested and sought after. The "conciliation" implies a new understanding or union between the higher and lower parts of the personality—they are no longer fighting each other or reaching for separate goals. Instead, they work in unison to "receive the divine influence which flows into it from its benediction" (Chesed). Reconciliation with the higher is the ultimate "reward"—the only thing that can satisfy the soul's hunger.

The Hebrew letter Kaph means "palm of the hand," something that is outstretched in the act of seeking or grasping, for the Twenty-first Path is not a route for the passive individual who wishes to sit back and let the world come to him. The emotion of Netzach gazes up at the loving merey in Chesed, and a strong undeniable desire for the divine is the result.

This is the path of the quest itself—the search for meaning and the essence of God. Although it may take many lifetimes to reach the end of the quest, the student must endure, even though circumstances may place obstacles in one's path. The trick is to not allow personal circumstance to rule over one's destiny.

The challenge for the student on this quest is to tenaciously wait out all obstacles, until the natural rhythmic cycle of the universe causes a change in circumstances that will allow progress once more.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF KAPH

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Netzach and continues on the Path of Kaph, where he encounters Perceval, the knight who is on a quest to find the Holy Grail. *Path emblem: A* Spirit wheel * .

With your eyes closed you begin to formulate the astral temple of Malkuth. You intone the divine names of *Adonai ha-Aretz, Sandalphon,* and *Ashim.* The archangel Sandalphon appears and you exchange the usual signs. When she asks why you have come to her abode, you hold up the symbol of the Spirit wheel. She escorts you quickly through the portal of Qoph in the southeast of the temple and up the Twenty-ninth Path to the temple of Netzach. Leaving Sandalphon, you enter the fire temple giving the Projection Sign. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

The familiar seven-sided temple draped in green silk presents itself to you. The sight of the emerald ceiling with the inlaid ruby heptagram never fails to please your eyes. Seven emerald columns, surmounted with grapevines, surround the ruby altar on which is the temple flame, roses, and a sistrum.

You announce your presence in the temple by vibrating the divine names which call forth its inhabitants: *YHVH Tzabaoth, Haniel,* and *Elohim.*

The archangel Haniel appears, a lovely, winged feminine creature in robes of green chiffon emblazoned with a red heptagram. She questions you: "Behold the abode of the fire and desire. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the symbol of the Spirit wheel."

Haniel nods with approval: "The Spirit wheel is an emblem of the unity of the divine, and of humanity's aspiration and desire for the divine. It is a worthy symbol for the Twenty-first Path of Kaph."

Haniel takes you east of the temple and draws back a portion of the green drapery to reveal a violet archway bearing a white letter Kaph on its keystone. Within the arch is a veil with the tarot image of *The Wheel of Fortune* painted on it. The archangel traces the symbol of Jupiter ♃ in the air before the archway, and the veil fades into mist. In its place is a door carved out of amethyst. Holding up the Spirit wheel, you trace the figure of the letter Kaph before the door, which dissolves. Stepping through the portal, you enter the Path of Kaph.

You step out hito an area of violet mist, alive with power and energy. You hear the voice of Haniel as she speaks to you:

"It is written, 'For the desire of thy house, O Adonai hath eaten me up. I desire to be dissolved and be with thee.' Guide me in my aspiration for that divine and only selfhood which is in thee."

Within the violet mist, you see the image of the Spirit wheel * , a large white circle with eight spokes—a figure which in medieval times was called the double cross circle. Before your eyes, the wheel transforms into a large, circular table made of wood. It is the Round Table of the Arthurian tradition. Seated around it are the legendary knights of the Fellowship of the Table Round. King Arthur of Britain is there as well, reigning over a peaceful kingdom characterized by justice and abundance. Then the Round Table and its knights vanish into the violet mist.

You find yourself in the midst of a desolate landscape of leafless trees, wasted fields, and dried-up lakes and streams. The sky is gray and overcast, without any hope of sunlight. It is cold but not damp. You imagine that this is what a nuclear winter might be like.

Emerging from a barren grove of trees, a figure on horseback approaches you—a handsome, young man wearing the armor of a knight. His horse, the color of chestnut, is obviously tired, and walks with a slow gait. The knight, too, looks as though he has been out on the road for a long time. His armor has lost its polish, and his hair is unkempt. However, his eyes still gleam with some indefinable fire. It is Perceval, one of the Grail knights. He raises his hand to address you:

"Good morrow to you, fellow traveler," he says. "What brings you to this godforsaken place?"

"I am journeying on the Twenty-first Path of Kaph." You hold up the sigil of the Spirit wheel.

Perceval nods. "Another seeker after the divine. Perhaps we should travel together for a time. Maybe we can both find what we seek."

With a gentle nudge, the knight directs his roan to assume a slow pace up the path, so that you can walk alongside without effort. The two of you continue on the trail through the ravaged landscape.

"This was once a beautiful valley filled with apple orchards," Perceval informs you, pointing to the bottomland. "And over there used to be a clear running stream. But that was before the Fisher King, Anfortas, took and the land was made barren. It is all a wasteland now.

"Some say that the king was once wounded in the thigh during some long ago war. They say that the wound has never healed and worsens even as we speak. I say that it is the king's heart that is wounded. It is his spirit that is sick. As the king fails, so does the land. For the king and the land are one. To heal one we must heal the other. And to do that, we must find the Grail. We must find the Grail or die trying."

Just then you notice another knight on horseback coming up the trail from the other direction. He looks to be in far worse shape than Perceval. The ribs of his horse are almost sticking through its skin. The rider is himself wounded, his arm hanging limply in a bloody make-shift sling. Perceval addresses him:

"Have you seen it?" he asks.

"No," answers the knight with barely any expression. "I don't think it even exists anymore."

The crippled knight passes by, his quest finished. Perceval seems stung by his words. "It does exist," he tells you, and you wonder just who it is he is trying to reassure. "The Grail must exist. Without it we are lost—the king and the land will wither away. We must find the Grail or die trying."

As you continue up the path, your companion explains how he carne to be on this quest.

"1 was but a boy, living half-wild in the woods, when I saw three noble knights for the first time. The sight of their armor

gleaming in the sunlight—I thought they were angels, even gods! I begged my mother for a horse that I might ride to the city of Camelot. There 1 might be knighted by Arthur of Britain and become a knight of the Table Round. 1 desperately wished to learn the arts of knighthood and chivalry.

"I set out for Arthur's Court a naive and foolish young man. In my raffish stupidity, I came across a noble woman, the Duchess Jeschute. I kissed her against her will and stole her wedding band. Little did I know that her husband, Duke Orilus, considered her



Figure 38: Perceval

dishonored. He left the poor woman in rags, penniless. In his fury, Orilus killed Prince Schionatulander, mistaking him for me, leaving his virgin bride, the Lady Sigune, to weep over the body of her beloved. Prince Schionatulander was comrade-in-arms of King Gamuret, my late father. The fair Prince died because of me. He died at Orilus' hand trying to protect the lands of *my* inheritance. Thus in my impetuous youth did I ruin the lives of many, including my family and my friends. Somehow I must make amends for all the sorrows I have caused.

"So ignorant was I then! I could neither read nor write. I did not even know my own name. The Lady Sigune revealed to me my true name—'Pierce-the-Vale'—Perceval, the light that pierces the darkness of the eastern sky at morrow. God grant me the ability to live up to my name!

"I arrived at Arthur's court, but I was not made a knight. I had to prove myself by fighting the red knight and many other warriors. Only then was I trained in the ways and manners of a knight. And one day, I know not how or why, I was guided to a castle by a fisherman. There I met the good King Anfortas who was gravely ill, wounded in the thigh by a spear. And in the great hall of the castle, I beheld a wondrous procession of fair maidens carrying candles and glass vessels. Then carne a radiant queen who carried something called the 'Grail.' Many knights and squires pledged their service to this Grail, but I did not understand the significance of what was taking place. The maimed king gave me his sword. Then and there, God had given me the opportunity to heal Anfortas, the Fisher King, by asking and answering the questions posed by the Grail. But I had no understanding of such things.

"The next morning I found myself alone. The castle had vanished into thin air. And the land began to waste away, just as the Fisher King was wasting away. For this was the Grail Castle of Montsalvasche, that I in my ignorance beheld but did not comprehend. Since that day, 1 and a handful of other knights have made finding the Grail our only aspiration. And on my quest 1 have learned much.

"Some say that the Grail is the Chalice of Our Lord at the Last Supper, or the Cup used by Joseph of Arimathea to catch the blood of

Christ on the cross. Other say it is a precious stone fallen from heaven, a magical cauldron of the goddess Ceridwen, or even a dish containing a head that speaks prophecy. I am a just simple man. I do not know what the Grail is. I only know that it will restore the Fisher King and the land. It will bring unity. I know this in my heart. I must find the Grail or die trying. There is nothing else to seek."

Perceval is silent for a while, during which time you study your companion knight. He seems regretful of his past misdeeds, but he also seems detached from worldly matters, and single-minded in his quest. He seems to have one foot in the material world and one foot in the invisible realms.

You travel over a long distance and see many strange sights, including a dragon belching fire and a voluptuous maiden with sweet, beckoning arms sitting in a circle of chalices which all look like the Grail. Perceval informs you that these are false Grail images meant to snare the unwary. As if to emphasize the point, he gestures to the skeletons of knights lying amid the circle of chalices—victims of their own lack of true vision.

At one point, you and your companion knight meet the Lady Sigune cradling a dead knight—shades of Perceval's past misdeeds. Next, you see a woman dressed in rags. It is the Duchess Jeschute, the noble lady that Perceval had earlier dishonored. She begins to weep and begs to be left alone, but your companion dismounts his horse and offers the lady his cloak for warmth. Yet another figure from Perceval's past emerges, Duke Orilus, wearing armor engraved with dragons. Orilus descends from his mount and rushes at Perceval with a bloodcurdling battle cry. The two warriors slash at each other with their swords, but Perceval has the upper hand. He is soon victorious, and demands that Orilus forgive his wife, who is innocent of blame. Eventually the Duke agrees, and Perceval gives back the ring that he had taken from the Duchess and begs her forgiveness. Perceval is actively working out his karma.

His past offenses corrected, Perceval takes to the road again, and you accompany him. At length you enter the city of Camelot, where your companion is boisterously greeted at King Arthur's court and escorted into the great hall of the Fellowship of the

Round Table. King Arthur of Britain embraces Perceval warmly and forgives him of all his former errors. Arthur prepares to receive Perceval as a full knight of the Table Round. But Perceval declines. "The Grail is my true destiny," he tells Arthur. "I have passed from the bliss of ignorance to the despair of knowledge. This humble knight must pull himself out of the depths and ascend to the heights. Peace has gone from me until I must find the Grail again. I will find the Grail or die trying."

The two of you leave Camelot and continue up the path. Night is falling, and your companion takes you to the forest home of an old hermit named Treverizent, who has been Perceval's guide and teacher throughout his years of questing. The hermit invites you both to warm yourselves by his fire. Perceval looks weary. He asks the hermit: "How long has it been since I was last here, old friend? How long has it been since I started this quest?"

"Four and a half years ago," Treverizent answers as he hands you each a cup of wine.

Perceval unexpectedly breaks down in front of his old mentor. "I fear I am lost," he sobs. "I have made so many errors in my life. I cannot remember the last time I entered a church. I miss my wife. I am angry with God for sending me on this endless journey full of sorrow and sacrifice. I don 't know how my soul came to be in such a state of conflict. I fear that I will die before I find the Grail again."

The old hermit consoles Perceval and gently admonishes him for having doubts. He then proceeds to offer spiritual advice. "Bear no anger toward God in your heart," he tells the knight. "The true divine light may shine in the darkness of the human heart, if the soul wishes to win the love of God. You have done all you can in this matter. Whether or not you find the Grail, it is in God's hands. It is a matter of God's grace and your destiny."

The hermit pauses, "I once beheld the Grail myself. I, too, saw the Grail Castle of Montsalvasche, the Mountain of Salvation. A host of valiant knights known as Templars guard the Grail. They journey from the castle seeking adventure. But whether they reap reward or failure for their efforts, they always fulfill the dictates of their destiny. I tell you now, these knights are sustained not by food, but by the power of the Grail, which is made of a pure stone.

This stone has the power to burn a phoenix to ashes and restore the bird to life. It has the power to make men young again. The Grail has the power to heal all wounds and return the fertility of the land. And it is engraved with the names of those Grail Kings who have come before, and the names of those who will come after.

"Why seek out God or his Grail when the same is said to be found on every church altar in Christendom? The Grail contains the power of the Holy Spirit. Its mysteries are beyond the ken of the average church liturgy. It contains the mysteries of the human soul—it has the ability to transfigure the heart, the mind, and the soul. These mysteries cannot be explained to you by one who has seen the Grail. Each must find it for themselves. The *personal* quest is the key to its understanding. And this understanding heals all wounds of the spirit. So, you must finish what you started. Find the Grail. Heal the Fisher King, and you will heal yourself."

Perceval nods silently and dries his tears. He thanks his old friend and gets up to check on his horse. You follow him outside.

"I will keep looking," he tells you, as he pats his roan horse. "1 cannot give up now. And if it be God's will that I find the Grail, then so be it. And if it be God's will that I never set eyes on it again, so be it. I must strive harder to purify myself and cleanse my soul. Either way, I must be true to whatever fate has dealt me."

The two of you gaze up at the full moon hanging in the cold dark sky, and contemplate the mystery of creation. The crisp night air feels pleasant and pure against the skin of your face.

Suddenly a look of surprise spreads across Perceval's face. "I see it!" he says. "I see the Grail Castle of Montsalvasche!"

Straining your eyes, you peer into the darkness in the direction that Perceval is looking. You see what he is looking at—a gleaming white castle seated on the rise of a hill. A dozen knights on horseback guard the front of the narrow bridge leading to the castle gate—six to each side of the bridge entry. How proud they look in their armor and tabards of white ornamented with red crosses. Just then, the castle gates swing open. Hovering some feet off the ground inside the castle entrance is a gleaming silver chalice surrounded by a brilliant halo of light. A white dove, the symbol of the Holy

Spirit, is suspended over the vessel. The Grail knights wait patiently for Perceval to join them.

"All this time and it was right here in front of me," Perceval says with quiet joy." Only now I have the eyes to see." He mounts his horse and turns to thank you for accompanying him on this journey. "Farewell to you, friend," he tells you warmly. "May you find what you seek."

Your companion walks his mount to where the others are waiting for him. The knights close ranks behind him as he crosses the bridge to Montsalvasche. There is no doubt in your mind that he will ask the right questions and be able to provide the right answers. He will heal the Fisher King. Of that you are certain. The gates of the castle close behind him and the structure vanishes. Perceval has found his Grail.

It is time to leave the Path of Kaph and return to the lower world. Descending to the temple of Netzach, you are greeted once more by the archangel Haniel. You proceed down the Path of Qoph to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon seals the portal of Qoph behind you. Bidding her farewell, you give the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.



The Twentieth Path of Yod

> *The Twentieth Path is the Intelligence of Will, and is so called because it is the means of preparation of all and each created being, and by this Intelligence the existence of the Primordial Wisdom becomes known.*

The "Intelligence of Will" denotes that this is the path where each individual "created being" is "prepared" for the spiritual quest by being made aware of the higher and divine "will" of the creator. By spiritual preparation (prayer, meditation, visualization, and aspiration), the student becomes aware of the higher will and ultimately attains oneness with the Divine Self—fully immersed in the knowledge of "the existence of the Primordial Wisdom."

The Hebrew letter Yod mean "hand," and it refers to the hand of the divine, extended to assist us. Yod is the primary letter whose shape forms the basis for all other Hebrew letters. This shape resembles a point, the beginning point of all created form. It also resembles a spermatozoon, the primary cell of procreation. The value of Yod is ten, the number of perfection, for everything beyond ten returns again to units.

The Twentieth Path leads from the Higher Self in Tiphareth to the merciful love in Chesed. The seat of balance and beauty has been attained, but a higher divine love still beckons with an open hand. The Path of Yod alludes to the self-created source of the universe. It is the path of adepthood, of union with the primordial source, the greater self of the universe. The Path of Yod is the route of introspection and individuation—it must be traveled alone. Here the magician learns to separate himself from the "herd mentality," which rules the lives of most people. This is a path that requires the determination to take up the quest on one's own. No one can make this journey for us. We must do it ourselves. And yet once the student has attained the level of self-realization symbolized by this route, the challenge is then to extend a helping hand to the next student who journeys up the path.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF YOD

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Yesod to Tiphareth, and continues on the Path of Yod. He is aided on the path by an old hermit named Moshe. *Path emblem:* An acorn

With your eyes closed, you begin to formulate the astral temple of Malkuth as the journey begins. The ten-sided chamber of Malkuth materializes around you. After you intone the usual names, Sandalphon appears and you exchange the signs. She inquires about your purpose in coming to her temple, and you hold up the acorn. The archangel leads you quickly through the portal of Tau in the east of the temple and up the Thirty-second

Path to the ethereal temple of Yesod, where you are greeted by Gabriel. Quickly you ascend the Path of Samekh to the hexagonal temple of Tiphareth, ornamented in golden and yellow.

You call forth the inhabitants of this temple by vibrating the names *YHVH Eloah ve-Daath, Raphael,* and *Melekim.* The radiant archangel Raphael appears. He addresses you:

"You have entered the realm of the Lord God of Knowledge. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?" he asks.

You answer, holding up the acorn: "By the symbol of the seed."

Raphael is satisfied. "The seed is a symbol of the source of life, containing hidden patterns of potential manifestation and latent power. It is a worthy symbol of the path of Yod."

Raphael leads you to a yellow-green archway in the east of the temple. On the keystone of the arch is the letter Yod in brilliant white. Within the archway is a veil on which is depicted the tarot card of *The Hermit.* Raphael traces the sigil of Virgo and parts the veil, exposing a door carved from peridot. Holding up the acron, you trace with it the letter Yod The door opens and you commence your journey on the Twentieth Path.

The blackness of night looms before you. The path is dimly lit by the crescent moon, and you have a hard time making out the surrounding terrain. The road is very rough and it is hard to maintain your footing. It seems as though the trail is only becoming worse, and soon even the sliver of the moon disappears behind the clouds. After only a short time spent stumbling in the darkness, you fall into a ditch by the side of the path. You sit up, nursing a bruised knee, wondering how you are going to finish this journey. It is pitch black and the road is impassable.

Just then you notice a light off in the distance—a small orb of brightness. At first you think it is a star off in the night sky, but it is too low and the light appears to wobble slightly. It seems to be getting closer. Someone is coming up the path toward you carrying a light. As he approaches, you make out the figure of a tall, mature man in a hooded brown robe holding a lantern in one hand and a staff in the other. He stops on the path next to you, pulls back the hood of his robe, and reveals a long mane of gray hair and a rugged face framed by a beard of the same color. Setting down the

lamp, he extends a strong hand down to help you. You grasp his hand and pull yourself to your feet.

"You shouldn't go stumbling around blind on the path in the dark," says the man in a gentle, scolding tone. "There are all sorts of dangers out in the wilderness at night."

You shake the dust off yourself. "Who are you?" you ask the man.

"Just a solitary traveler like yourself," he replies, "but you can call me Moshe. I come this way often, looking for those in need of aid, like yourself. I can guide you up the path, but you must stay close."

You study his face made leathery by years of sun exposure and animated by a strong inner spirit. You notice two faint areas of light on either side of his head which radiate outward. They almost resemble horns.

The lamp of the hermit illuminates the road before you, and you can now see why it was so foolish to proceed in the dark. The trail is full of potholes and sharp rocks. "This road is very old and not often traveled," your guide informs you. The light from Moshe's lamp cuts through the inky blackness like a diamond of light.

"You could say that I've lived many lives and walked many paths in one lifetime," Moshe tells you. "1 was raised as a prince in ancient Egypt, where I learned the arts of theurgy, or god-working, and Heka, or magic. But I was Hebrew by birth. One day I killed a man, an Egyptian overlord, and had to flee to the land of Midian. I was a fugitive. But I married the daughter of a priest and settled down to live the life of a simple shepherd tending flocks of sheep. But that was not the path that destiny had chosen for me.

"One day, 1 was looking for good pasture when I came to the base of a mountain. There I saw the most amazing sight. I saw a tree that was on fire, surrounded with a halo of burning white light. Yet the leaves of the tree were not consumed by the flames. And I heard a great, loud voice telling me that I was standing on holy ground. This voice identified itself as the god of my ancestors, the god who had been known as *El Elyon,* the "God Most High," and *El Shaddai,* "Almighty God." This voice identified itself now as *Yahweh* who "Brings into Being." It was then that 1 knew I was in the very presence of pure deity. How can I express what I experienced? There are no words to describe it in terms that another can

understand. I was in the company of what some have called the Logos, the first self-created word of God whose utterance created the universe. From that point on, I was a changed man.

"The voice of Yahweh told me that I must lead the Hebrew people out of Egypt. How could I do that? 1 asked the deity. How could 1 lead my people? I was learned in the ways of Egyptian magic, and I knew the sacred practices and spiritual beliefs of my own forefathers. But 1 did not feel qualified to take on such a task. I was no leader, and I was no priest. 1 was a murderer, a wanted man! I begged not to be chosen for this task. Surely, there were greater spiritual leaders—more accomplished magicians—than 1. I pleaded with the deity to select another.

"Yahweh would not hear of it. 'You must go, Moshe,' the deity told me. 'I know your heart is true, and I know your soul is humble. I will not choose a leader who claims higher celebrity or greater spiritual accomplishments. Are not the countenances of darkness fallen with kings? It is not by proclamation of honors and dignities that one may claim to be my representative. I have chosen you, not because of your words, titles, nor even your deeds, but because your heart is just and merciful. You will be a wise and evenhanded ruler.'

"So, with the blessing of Yahweh, 1 went to Egypt and insisted that Ramses release the Hebrew people from their bondage. Eventually he complied, and 11ed my people out of the land of Khem and into the wilderness of Sinai. The journey across the desert was long, harsh, and difficult, but eventually 1 brought the people to Mt. Sinai, the Mountain of God, where 1 first saw the fiery bush and heard the voice of the deity. When 1 returned, Yahweh spoke to me again and gave me ten mandates of law—ten lights—with which my people would manifest a stable and just community. As a society that tried to emulate divinity, we organized ourselves into twelve tribes. From the word of Yahweh carne forth the manifestation of a new civilization.

"Led my people to a new land of promise. Yet when my God decreed that I not enter into the new land with my people, I did as the Spirit commanded. The Children of Israel never saw me again. I left the world of matter, and now I roam the wilderness once



Figure 39: The Hermit

more, helping travelers make their way up the path through darkness to the light."

You listen to Moshe 's story intently. Suddenly, the old hermit puts up his hand to stop you in your tracks. "Be quiet," he tells you. Straining your eyes to see what the problem is, you observe a very large serpent crossing the path in front you. The beams of light from the hermit's lamp seem to attract the snake, which you recognize as a death adder—fat and venomous. Moshe raises his staff and yells something in a language that you don 't recognize. He throws the staff down on the ground, and you watch as the staff transforms into an uraeus, or cobra. The cobra rears its hooded head and strikes at the death adder which recoils, hissing its displeasure. The uraeus attacks the other snake and the two animals spiral around each other in a serpentine wrestling match. When the two serpents break off, the adder sees an opening and makes its escape, quickly slithering off the side of the road. Then the victorious cobra straightens its body out and becomes as stiff as a board. Your companion bends down to retrieve his staff.

"The power of the serpent is very potent," Moshe tells you. "It must be used wisely, and with caution. Many an unvigilant traveler has been burned by the snake's venom."

You continue up the path. The black clouds of night recede slightly, giving you a splendid view of the stars. The trail leads to the foot of a mountain, and you wonder if this is indeed the mountain where Moshe heard the voice of Yahweh emanating from the flaming tree.

Moshe points his staff skyward to a point of light in the heavens. A ray from his lantern shines upward in the direction of the planet Jupiter. "That is Tzedek," Moshe informs you. "It means the righteous or holy one." It is an image of the sphere at the end of this path. One who truly reaches the conclusion of this path might well be called a *tzaddik* or holy person. But a true tzaddik would never claim to be such. I brought my people out of Egypt, but it was never because of my own power or knowledge. It was because of a merciful and forgiving God who gave me a second chance. Any gifts or strengths I might appear to have come solely from the Most High. So 1 have always striven to emulate God and

be forgiving to others—lending a helping hand to travelers in need. Al! I ask in return is that *you* do likewise."

As you look up into the night sky filled with the majestic panorama of stars, worlds, and galaxies, a familiar prayer comes to your lips:

"Unto Thee Sole Wise, Sole Eternal, and Sole Merciful One, be the praise and glory forever, who hath permitted me, who now standeth humbly before Thee, to enter thus far into the sanctuary of thy mystery. Not unto me, Adonai, but unto thy name be the glory. Let the influence of thy divine ones descend on my head, and teach me the value of self-sacrifice so that 1 shrink not in the hour of trial. But that thus my name may be written on high, and my Genius stand in the presence of the Holy One. In that hour when the Son of Man is invoked before the Lord of Spirits and his Name before the Ancient of Days."

Moshe seems pleased. His work is done for now, and he bids you farewell. He turns to the mountain, but not before giving you his lantern for your return trip home. You watch the figure of the hermit dissolve into the base of the mountain. In the place where you last saw him, you see a tree that seems to be on fire. It burns brightly for a moment before disappearing.

Your journey on the Twentieth Path of Yod has reached its completion. You return to the temple of Tiphareth where you are greeted by the archangel Raphael. You descend the Path of Samekh to Yesod and from there you continue down the Path of Tau to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon secures the portal of Tau. You salute the archangel of Malkuth with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.



The Nineteenth Path of Teth

> *The Nineteenth Path is the Intelligence of the Secret of all the activities of the spiritual beings, and is so called because of the influence diffused by it from the most high and exalted sublime glory.*

The "secret activities" of the spiritual beings (or angels) include the powers of number, expansion, contraction, and vibration-those same forces that created the universe of the Sephiroth. By understanding the nature of these secret activities and by working with them, we are brought closer to these "beings." This reciproca) or horizontal path is a "diffused" counterpart of the influence of Kether, "the most high and exalted sublime glory."

The Hebrew letter Teth means "serpent," which in Hebrew mysticism is a symbol of wisdom. It also represents a type of electromagnetic energy not unlike that of the Eastern Kundalini. This "serpent power" is used by mystics to activate the body's energy centers to cause a kind of divine rapture. The Nineteenth Path connects the Sephiroth of Chesed and Geburah, the primary spheres of water and fire on the Tree. Between these two polarities a natural electrical circuit is formed that generates this vitalizing "serpent power," which is part of the magnetic current that powers the entire universe. The ability to direct and regulate this power is the basis for all occult work.

The goal of the traveler on this path is to learn how to exercise control over the various primal energies of both body and mind (instinctive tendencies, behavior patterns, etc.). The student must also be willing to face his deepest fears.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF TETH

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth, Yesod, and Tiphareth to Geburah, and continues on the Path of Teth. He finds himself in ancient Babylon where he encounters various figures and events from the Hebrew Book of Daniel. He meets

the prophet Daniel, who has just slain a dragon and is cast into a den of lions for this crime. *Path Symbol:* The oroboros or serpent holding its tail in its mouth O.

With your eyes closed, you begin to formulate the astral temple of Malkuth as the journey begins. The temple of Malkuth forms around you. After the usual invocations, Sandalphon appears and you exchange the signs. She asks you to state your purpose for entering her abode, and you hold up the serpent pendant that you wear around your neck. The archangel leads you quickly through the portal of Tau in the east of the temple, and up the Thirty-second Path to the temple of Yesod where you are greeted by Gabriel. You quickly ascend the Path of Samekh to the temple of Tiphareth. From there you ascend the Path of Lamed to the pentagonal temple of Geburah ornamented in red with flashing green.

You call forth the inhabitants of this temple by vibrating the names *Elohim Gibor, Khamael,* and *Seraphim.* The warrior archangel Khamael appears. He addresses you:

"You have entered the realm of Power and purification. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?" he asks.

You answer: "By the symbol of the serpent." You hold up the emblem of the oroboros.

Khamael nods: "The serpent eating its own tail is a symbol of the potent and incessant energy of the universe. It is a worthy symbol of the Path of Teth."

Khamael leads you to a yellow archway in the south of the temple. On the keystone of the arch is the letter Teth in brilliant white. Within the archway is a veil on which is depicted the tarot card of *Strength.* Khamael traces the sigil of Leo cQ and parts the veil, exposing a door carved from pure cat's eye. Holding up the serpent pendant, you trace with it the letter Teth L1. The door opens and you commence your journey on the Nineteenth Path.

You find yourself in a dry, mountainous region near an ancient Babylonian temple. Great sculptures of winged bulls with human heads guard the entrance to tlíe temple—mighty stone Kerubs that emerge from the columns on either side of the gateway like twin locomotives. The structure is impressive in its size, and you can 't

help but imagine how splendid the structure must appear when great religious processions are held there.

A crowd of people is gathered in the entrance to the courtyard of the temple. Something is definitely happening here. You push forward through the crowd to see the cause of the commotion. The crowd jeers at three young men who are chained together. The men have obviously been beaten—they look bruised but not broken. You see great strength in their eyes. Although you are not certain why there men have been singled out for persecution, you get a sense that they are not afraid of whatever fate lies before them.

At the head of the crowd is a man dressed in the regalia of a monarch. The three prisoners whose names, you are told, are Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, appear to have disobeyed their ruler and invoked his wrath. The great king, Nebuchadnezzar, orders the three men cast into a great furnace used to burn the bodies of animals killed in sacrificial rites. The crowd begins to move forward, carrying the three prisoners along with it. They shove the three men toward a large stone furnace situated at one end of the courtyard. A roaring fire has been carefully maintained under the fixture—you feel its intense heat from several feet away. Black smoke billows out of the top of the oven. One by one the captives are hurled into the furnace.

You are prepared to hear horrible screams of agony coming from the doomed men. Instead, an amazing thing happens. One of the three captives begins to recite a prayer of thanksgiving.

Drawing as close as you can to the front of the furnace to look inside, you see the three men with their heads bowed, kneeling together in triangular formation on flaming red coals. Yet, they seem to be unharmed. Now, all three raise their voices in prayer:

"Blessed is Adonai in the firmament of heaven. All you angelic hosts, sun and moon, stars of heaven, fire and heat, dew and rain, seas and rivers, winds and clouds, mountains and hills, days and nights, light and darkness, souls and spirits. Bless Adonai! Praise and exalt him forever. For he has delivered us from the netherworld, and saved us from the power of death. Bless Adonai, for his mercy endures forever! "[32]

A hush falls over the astonished crowd. King Nebuchadnezzar is moved by what he has just witnessed. He orders the trio released and the prisoners emerge from the furnace unscathed. The three captives appear to have a renewed vitality about them, as if the experience of the flaming furnace had cleansed their souls and purified them of all imperfection. The king grants the three men special honors and promotions and the trio leaves the temple courtyard unopposed. You leave the courtyard as well.

Continuing down the path, you see another temple similar in style and ornamentation. All of a sudden, a horrible roar pierces the air—the sound emanates from the temple. People come running from all directions to find the source of the disturbance. They pour into the temple entrance and into the main sanctuary room. You follow them into the great hall where you see a huge black dragon. The beast rears up on its hind legs and slams its horned head into the ceiling. The entire building shakes as some of the masonry from the roof comes crashing down. The dragon gives another bloodcurdling bellow—it appears to be in great pain. The creature writhes and shudders, foaming at the mouth. All of a sudden its belly splits open, spilling its incides across the temple floor. With a final howl, the beast dies. Its body immediately begins to decay at an astounding rate, filling the temple with a foul stench. Within minutes, the body dissolves completely, leaving behind a pile of salt, a pool of oil, and a vapor that rises to the ceiling of the temple.

Soldiers push their *way* to the front of the assembly. One of them steps up to examine the carcass. "Who has done this?" he asks. "Who has killed the dragon of the temple?"

A man in a simple yellow robe steps forward. "I am Daniel, whom some call prophet and others call magician. I am he who interprets the king's dreams and visions. I am he whose Judge is God. I killed the dragon, for all things must be purified in the sight of God. It is written: 'Learn then to separate the pure from the impure, and refine the gold of the spirit from the black dragon, the corruptible body.'"[33]

The mood of the crowd turras ugly. They demand that the king hand Daniel over to them for punishment. Reluctantly, with the mob threatening violence, the king acquiesces. The king's guards

seize the man who is sentenced to death for the crime of killing the dragon. Surprised at your own audacity, you voice a protest at so harsh a penalty. The soldiers take you into custody as well. Both you and the dragon-slayer are taken to a prison cell under the city.

You and the other captive are locked into a dark, narrow chamber consisting of nothing but stone walls and metal bars. Human bones, the remains of other unfortunate prisoners, are strewn across the floor. The other man, Daniel, seems strangely calm in this dismal place. A series of wooden gates line the walls leading down into the chamber. From behind the gates you hear feral sounds of large animals bellowing in hunger. A moment later, one of the gates is raised and a large dark shape dashes out from under it. An enormous, red-maned lion stands before you, savagely beautiful. The beast's eyes fix on Daniel, and with a low, hungry growl, it slowly begins to stalk its prey.

Daniel makes a gesture at the creature—he stands with his hands placed over the middle of his chest in such a way that his thumbs and index fingers form an inverted triangle around the area of his heart. Snarling, the lion slinks forward, but when it reaches Daniel it stops suddenly, as if confused. Incredibly, the beast lies down and begins to lick the prophet's feet. Daniel reaches down and stokes the lion's head as if it were a favorite pet.

Six more of the gates are raised, releasing more of the lions. But the outcome is exactly the same--Daniel assumes a certain posture, and the temperament of the beasts turns from man-eaters to domes-tic house cats. Soon all seven lions and lionesses lie like kittens at Daniel's feet. You ask Daniel how he is able to tame the creatures.

Daniel answers: "I am Daniel of Judah. But I am known in the land of Babylon as Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians. My lord Adonai has given me knowledge of all science, including the understanding of all visions and dreams. But such knowledge is not granted to those who have not learned to balance the harshness of the Black Pillar with the compassion of the White. Samson broke down the two pillars and perished. As a house built upon the sand cannot endure, so without the strength of Geburah, the height of Chesed cannot be scaled."[34]

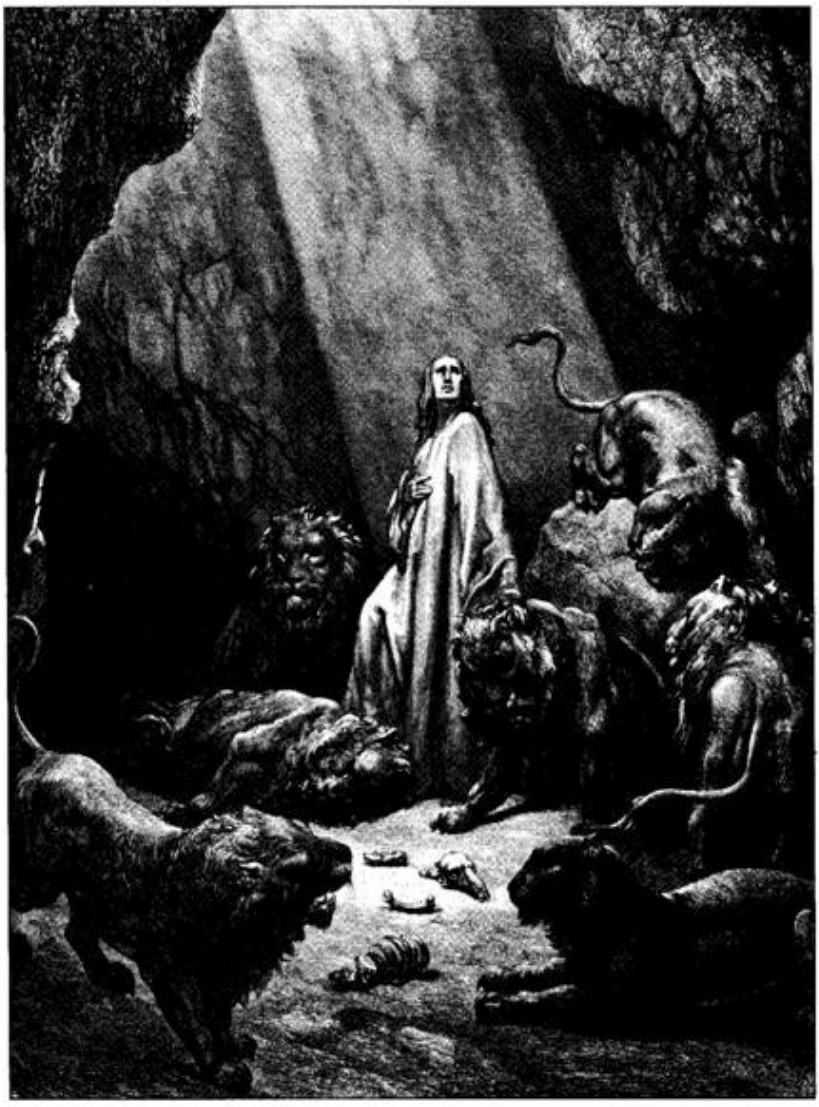


Figure 40: Daniel in the Lion's Den

Daniel points to your oroboros pendant, then begins to stroke the head of one of the lions. "The power of the serpent is the key to the question you ask. The serpent is the symbol of wisdom. The lion is the symbol of brute strength and raw, primal power contained in the deepest, most hidden portion of the human mind. Used wisely, the serpent can control the beast within, harnessing and directing its power in unity of purpose. Thus may its strength be used constructively in the service of the divine, and not squandered on divided impulses, primitive instincts, and conditioned behaviors. Great and wondrous things may be accomplished with it. But this borders on the secret knowledge belonging to the angels and archangels. It is granted to those who are worthy in the eyes of God."

You speak with Daniel for hours, perhaps even days. Having been a magician, a prophet, and a seer for several Babylonian kings, Daniel has much to teach. You are captivated by the tales of his many exploits and the various dreams he has interpreted. You are not even aware of the passage of time. After seven days, you hear several people approaching your prison cell. The king has come to the lion 's den to mourn for his chief magician. He gives a cry of joy at seeing Daniel still alive. All present marvel at the prophet's ability not only to sur-vive the ordeal, but to tame the feral lions. The two of you are released from the den and taken back to the city.

As the time nears for you to leave, Daniel shares one more bit of knowledge with you:

"King Nebuchadnezzar once dreamt of a great image—a figure of a man whose head was pure gold, his breast and arms were silver, his belly and thighs were brass, his legs of iron, and his feet part iron and part clay. A stone that was cut out without hands smote the image upon its feet, which were part iron and part clay, and broke them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors. The wind carried them away and no place was found for them. And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain that filled the earth."

Daniel grasps you by both shoulders. "You are a king among kings, for God has given unto thee the Kingdom, the power, and

the glory." As he speaks these words, he anoints you with the Qabalistic Cross.

"You are this head of gold," Daniel continues. "Your head represente in you the domination of the divine ruling over the rest of the body. The silver is the world of the heart, the brass is the material passion, the iron is the firm purpose, and the feet, part iron and part clay, the mixed strength and weakness of the human being. And the stone made without hands is the eternal Stone of the Wise which will become the Mountain of Initiation whereby the whole earth will be filled with knowledge of God. For as the whole is greater than the part, so are we but sparks from the insupportable light of the divine."[35]

With that, Daniel leaves you. It is time for you to leave as well. Your journey on the Path of Teth is at an end. You retrace your steps back to Geburah. From there you descend the Path of Lamed to Tiphareth and the Path of Samekh to Yesod. From there you continue down the Path of Tau to Malkuth.

Sandalphon seals the portal of the Thirty-second Path behind you. You bid farewell to the archangel of Malkuth and salute with the Projection Sign. Sandalphon gives the Sign of Silence.



Chesed

Chesed is the fourth Sephirah and the sphere of "mercy." The mercy of Chesed is divine love, peace, and justice at the highest level. It is unconditional spiritual love. Chesed bestows great abundance, joy, laughter, and the love of life as well as love for God. It also bestows growth, expansion, and prosperity. The patterns of the Tree of Life repeat themselves after the initial three spheres are formed, therefore Chesed is the same type of energy as Chokmah, but on a lower, more manifest level. While Chokmah may be likened to an all-knowing, all-powerful father, Chesed is the benevolent, loving, and protective father who is unselfish and forgiving. One of the lessons of Chesed is that obedience to the higher is an

honor, not an indignity. Jupiter, the planet of growth and increase, is assigned to this Sephirah.

The *Sepher Yetzirah* says:

> *The Fourth Path is named the Cohesive or Receptacular Intelligence; and it is so-called because it contains all the holy powers, and from it emanate all the spiritual virtues with the most exalted essences: they emanate one from the other by the power of the Primordial Emanation, the Highest Crown, Kether.*

The term "Cohesive" again refers to Chesed's capacity to gather together all the unmanifest energies (the holy powers) it has received from the Supernals across the expanse of the Abyss. These powers or emanations are not in any way diminished as they descend the Tree and continue on the path of materialization.

This is the first sphere below the Abyss and the second Sephirah on the right-hand pillar. It is therefore the first sphere of our physical universe, because in Chesed can be found the structural support of all that is manifested. Chesed receives the neutral current of the divine light, which has been modified and disciplined by Binah's feminine energy (negative form), and gives it another influx of masculine energy (positive force). This begins the process of materializing the abstract energies of the Supernals. Chesed is the matrix on which the archetypal ideas will later be built into tangible form.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO CHESED

Summary: The student journeys from Malkuth, Yesod, and Tiphareth to Chesed, where he encounters the archangel Tzadgiel and the angelic choir known as the Chashmalim, the "shining ones." He finds himself in the middle of a thunderstorm in ancient Canaan, where a group of priests petition the high god El to end the rains and calm the seas. *Chesed Symbol:* The tetrahedron L .

You enter the temple of Malkuth, vibrating the appropriate divine names, and giving the usual signs. Quickly, you ascend the Path of Tau to Yesod, and the Path of Samekh to Tiphareth. From there you ascend the Path of Yod to Chesed. You find yourself

standing at the end of the path, facing the door to the astral temple of Chesed. A large blue door is before you. Carved into this door is the Hebrew letter Cheth painted in orange. Giving the Projection Sign, you step through the door into Chesed. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

The temple of Chesed has four walls draped in blue velvet. The ceiling is carved from pure sapphire, ornamented with a central square outlined in orange. The floor of the sanctuary is also engraved with a square, and four large candlesticks mark the angles of the room. The temple flame burns very bright atop the blue altar in the center of the room. The scent of cedar drifts through the air.

Announcing your presence, you call forth the inhabitants of this Sephirah, vibrating the divine name *El* and the name of the archangel *Tzadqiel.* Then you call on the order of angels known as the *Chashmalim.*

A thick mist forms in the east of the sanctuary, materializing into an angelic figure who faces you across the altar—a jovial, bearded man in rich blue robes ornamented with an orange diamond. A white diamond-shaped nimbus of light surrounds his head and powerful blue and orange wings adorn his shoulders. In his right hand he carries a shepherd's crook. Tzadqiel, "the Righteousness of God," observes you with deep brown eyes that instantly put you at ease. He addresses you:

"You Nave entered the realm of Gedulah, majesty and greatness. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the symbol of the tetrahedron."

Tzadqiel responds: "The tetrahedron is a pyramid formed from four triangles—the banal triangle receives the influences of the three which are aboye. It is a worthy symbol for the fourth sphere."

Facing the archangel across the altar, Tzadqiel directs your attention to the temple flame burning brightly in a bowl carved from pure sapphire. The flame fiares suddenly and the room around you becomes translucent—it fades from view. It is replaced by a swirling mass of blue clouds. Against this backdrop an image comes into view—a point of light within a circle of light. The points moves and traces a horizontal line. Then the point of light returns to the middle of the fine and traces another line, vertical to the first, forming a cross.

Next, the horizontal line of light moves, first upward then downward, covering the cross and forming a flat square of light within the circle. You hear the voice of Tzadqiel speaking to you:

"The motion of the point maketh the line, the cross, and the plane or square. So, therefore, are the square and the cross but one symbol, deriving from the circle and the point."[36]

The image before you changes to the image of the Garden of Eden before the Fall.[37] Tzadqiel continues:

"The pyramid has been broken open. The square has been laid bare. The triangle points upward. The circle will begin to operate."

There is a flash of blue light, and you find yourself standing in a marketplace before a medieval castle. Several merchant's tables are bedecked with all manner of goods for sale clothing, jewelry, and other items. Other tables have been set up by farmers selling foodloaves of bread, meat, eggs, and vegetables. Finely dressed men and women walk from table to table, bartering over merchandise, and occasionally buying something. This appears to be a land of plenty, and even the peasants seem to be prospering here.

The castle gates swing open, and a host of winged, knightly figures, mounted on horses of the purest white, ride out toward you. They are dressed in chain mail and armor that shines in the colors of translucent blue and amethyst. As they get closer, you see that their skin also shines. It is as though their bodies were mere containers for brilliant white flames, which give their complexions an unparalleled radiance. One of their number rides in a chariot drawn by eagles. He is grand figure—a king in robes of blue and violet trimmed with ermine. It is the archangel of Chesed in his persona as *Tzadqiel Chashmalel,* leader of the angelic host of the fourth Sephirah. Unexpectedly, Tzadqiel gives a hearty laugh. His mirth is infectious, and you soon feel a smile spreading across your face, much to the delight of the rest of the company. Tzadqiel speaks:

"We are the Chashmalim, the Shining Ones, the order of angels associated with the sphere of Chesed. We are the givers of abundance and the liberating virtue of joy—divine messengers who whisper encouragement in times of despair, and who teach humanity to laugh at adversity. We bestow the gifts of expansion, energy, and plenitude, but those we give our blessings to must

take care not to fall into the vices of greed, gluttony, expansion of the ego, or spiritual tyranny. Remember that the knowledge of *how to safely control* power is a prerequisite to *having* power. This is why Geburah is an important precursor to Chesed on your journey up the Tree.

"We advise you to always do what is right, noble, and good. It is written: 'A thing is not right because God wills it, but God wills it because it is right.' Therefore all 'wrongs' must be converted to 'rights' on this level of the Tree. Thus it is our duty to direct all things to their 'right' state of being—to bring the Garden of Eden back to its original state before the Fall. We carry out our duties with great pleasure, and we teach that the way to the divine is through generosity and kindness."

The Chashmalim suddenly burst into joyous laughter, and in a flash of light they are gone. You find yourself standing in a village in the middle of a fierce thunderstorm. Rain driven by a harsh wind stings your face and makes it difficult to see. You are soon



Figure 41: A Knightly Figure

soaked to the bone. Before you is a hill illuminated by a ring of fire around its summit. Drawing closer, you see that the top of the hill is encircled by torches. You walk up the path to the hilltop, wondering how the torches manage to stay lit in this blinding rain. In the center of the circle is a group of shaven-headed priests, dressed in white tunics. They stand before a large square altar marked at the four corners with bull horns that point upward. A slaughtered calf lies on the altar—a sacrificial offering to some deity. The high priest of the ceremony stands just west of the altar, facing east. East of the altar is a veiled woman, a priestess, standing before a small tree.

You ask one of the assistants what is happening. He tells you that the gods are angry with the people of Canaan, because they have not been diligent in their prayers and offerings. The rains have not stopped for over ten days. The ground is saturated, and the rivers are overflowing their banks. Yamm, the god of hostile waters, has stirred up the sea, smashing all ships and flooding the lower regions along the shore, drowning entire villages. Mot, the death-god, is claiming many victims. The people of Canaan are suffering, therefore the priests have come to this high place of worship to appeal to the high god for an end to this misery.

The high priest raises his arras skyward, oblivious to the deluge. He invokes the goddess Asherah into the body of the veiled priestess, for it is Asherah, the wife and companion of El, who can ascend to the heavenly palace to ask the high god for assistance. The priestess, speaking as the goddess Asherah, calls out to the high god on behalf of his afflicted people:

"You are great, O El, the eternal one. Indeed you are wise. Your wisdom is forever, you who are known as the Ancient of Days. Mighty Bull El! King, father, and head of the divine assembly! A life of good fortune is your decree! Hear me and be moved to compassion. Your people are in distress. Have pity upon those who suffer! You who dominate the heavens, direct your son, Lord Baal, to end his rains and pulí back his storm clouds. Break the back of the evil Yamm and put an end to his destruction. Send Mot back to his abode in the underworld! Merciful El, the Kindly One! Your people need you! They deeply regret their transgressions and ask for your forgiveness.

Asherah asks that El, the Beneficent Father of Humanity, look with favor upon his people, the sons and daughters of El!"

The high priest continues the prayer:

"You are great, O El, the eternal one. The ageless one who created us! Father of Years! There is no other deity more noble and mightier than you! Mighty El, whose strength and steadfastness is like that of a bull! El, the kindly and benign! You are a merciful god, forever showing love to your children. Those who are righteous are dear to you. In the orbit of heaven and earth, you are the light. You, are the creator of all the lands and the inspired lord of judgment. Among the elder gods, you are the one who is celebrated. The gods of heaven and earth are obedient to you! Compassionate El, god of mercy! You, who are the father of the oppressed and the lowly, take your people to heart. Bless us and forgive us for our wrongs. Accept our remorse for having offended you. Direct your son Lord Baal to stop the endless rains. Put down Prince Yamm and the hostile seas! You, who are the giver of good fortune, favor your people now with kindness! Mourn for our pain and rejoice in our happiness!"

The rain begins to decrease and the storm clouds part to reveal a perfect rainbow. Several of the priests and their assistants fall to their knees and cry tears of joy. Gazing up at the blue sky behind the rainbow, you see a vision of the high god of the Canaanites. The merciful god El gazes down at you. His long hair and beard are milky white, and his face is that of an old king, creased with age and wisdom. His gray eyes display both intelligence and tenderness. El is usually remote, goveming cosmic order from afar. But he has been moved by the suffering of his people, for he is a friend to humanity. In your vision, El moves his hand slowly from left to right, and the rain stops entirely. The seas become calm, and the sun begins to break through the retreating storm clouds.

Suddenly, people begin coming out in droves from all directions. Held captive in their own bornes by the elements, the people of Canaan pour out of their houses to give thanks to the high god. They circle the hill with all manner of offerings to the god of mercy. Many are so jubilant that they begin to dance and break out in songs of praise. You Nave no doubt of the sincerity of their gratitude.

The vision fades and you find yourself once again in the astral temple of Chesed, facing the archangel Tzadqiel across the sapphire altar. The archangel puts his hand on your shoulder as he addresses you:

"It is written: 'Boast not thyself aboye thy brother if he hath fallen for how knowest thou that thou couldest have withstood the same temptation. Slander not, and revile not. If thou canst praise, do not condemn. Be thou therefore merciful, even as thy father who is in heaven is merciful. Bear with one another and forgive one another."[38]

You thank the archangel Tzadqiel for his insights into the realm of Chesed. Then you quickly descend the Path of Yod to Tiphareth. Following the Path of Samekh to Yesod, you continue down the Path of Tau to Malkuth. The archangel Sandalphon seals the door behind you. Facing the portal to the physical world, you give the Projection Sign and step through. Once on the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.

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Endnotes

1. In the descending order of the paths, one would expect the paths to be numbered as follows: the path leading from Tiphareth to the seventh Sephirah of Netzach to be the twenty-fourth, the path leading from Tiphareth to the eighth Sephirah of Hod to the twenty-fifth, and that leading from Tiphareth to the ninth Sephirah of Yesod to be the twenty-sixth. Such is not the case, however.
2. From the Portal Ritual. (See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 214.)
3. Genesis 28.
4. One of the twelve permutations of the Tetragrammaton. Associated with Sagittarius.
5. St. John of the Cross, quoted by Knight. (See Knight, A *Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism,* Volume Two, 73.)
6. Adapted from the Adeptus Minor Ritual. (See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 239.)
7. Adapted from Portal Ritual and the Adeptus Minor Ritual of the Golden Dawn.
8. Ibid.
9. From the Portal Ritual. (See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn, 212.)*
10. Ibid., 208.

11. Ibid., 334.
12. Adapted from "Libellus VIII" from the *Corpus Hermeticum.*
13. See Regardie,`The *Golden Dawn,* 227.
14. Adapted from Neophyte, Portal, and Adeptus Minor Rituals of the Golden Dawn.
15. Ibid., 228.
16. *Hoc universi compendium unius mihi sepulchrum feci.* This phrase is from the *Fama Fraternitatis,* a Rosicrucian manifesto that appeared in Kassel, Germany in 1614. It was translated into English in 1652 by Thomas Vaughan. S. L. Mac-Gregor Mathers drew heavily on the legend of Christian Rosenkreutz's life and the discovery of his tomb as portrayed in the *Fama* when he wrote the Golden Dawn 's Adeptus Minor Ritual. (See Regardie's *The Golden Dawn,* 235.)
17. Adapted from "Libellus XIII" from the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the Neophtye Ritual of the Golden Dawn.
18. See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 129-130.
19. Ibid., 227.
20. Adapted from Zelator and Practicus Rituals of the Golden Dawn.
21. Ibid., 235. (Taken from Matthew 16:24.)
22. Ibid., 236.
23. Ibid.
24. Israel Regardie's adaptation of the Second Adept's prayer from the Adeptus Minor Ceremony.
25. Ibid., 230.
26. See Chapter Six, page 114.
27. One of the twelve permutations of the Tetragrammaton. Associated with Libra.
28. Adapted from our book *Self-Initiation into the Golden Dawn Tradition,* 24.
29. See Regardie's *The Golden Dawn,* 190-191. (Taken from Exodus 15:3 and Psalms 29:3-8.)
30. From "The Bornless Ritual." (See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 445.) Also see Betz, 103 (PGM V. 96-172, "The Stele of Jeu the hieroglyphist in his letter").
31. Adapted from Regardie's ritual of "The Opening by Watchtower."
32. Adapted from "The Canticle of Praise," The Book of Daniel 3:52-90.
33. See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 151.
34. Adapted from Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 210, 121.
35. Ibid., 206, 130.
36. Ibid., 204-205.
37. Refer to Plate 3 in *Self-Initiation into the Golden Dawn Tradition.*
38. See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn, 228.*

THE UPPER REALMS OF THE TRES

The Supernal spheres and the paths that link them are associated with the deepest mysteries of the universe and the core of the self. They describe a realm beyond our limited concepts of time and space where the eternal blueprints of existence are maintained in their purest and most abstract state. Thus, their secrets cannot be experienced, much less comprehended, by the conscious mind.

As with the Path of Samekh that crosses the Veil of Paroketh, the Path of Gimel, which crosses the major boundary known as the abyss, marks a break in the usual numerical ordering of the student's ascent up the Tree. Just as before, it is important to assimilate the middle path of balance before approaching those paths that lean to one side or the other. In the upper realms of the Tree, the paths leading from Tiphareth to the Supernals must be tackled first. It is necessary to ascend to each Sephirah beginning with the lower-most sphere that connects with it. Therefore, the student must explore the Thirteenth Path of Gimel, which passes directly through Daath, before proceeding on to the sphere of Binah by way of the Seventeenth Path of Zayin and the Eighteenth Path of Cheth.

The Thirteenth Path of Gimel

> *The Thirteenth Path is named the Uniting Intelligence, and is so called because it is itself the Essence of Glory. It is the Consummation of the Truth of individual spiritual things.*

This path is a direct pipeline that unites the Higher Self (Tiphareth) to the Divine Self (Kether). It is the direct route of the soul. The Thirteenth Path, more than any other, is the path that connects the lesser universe of man to the greater universe of the godhead—the god-spark within to the source beyond. And because it is a clear, straight path between the major spheres of the head and the heart, it is the "Essence of Glory," which bestows a particular level of clarity and truth.

The Hebrew letter Gimel means "camel," an animal known for its stamina and ability to store water for long trips across the desert. The Path of Gimel is the longest path on the Tree, and thus, the symbol of the camel is appropriate. This path is sometimes said to be the only practical path that the student can use to reach Kether, since the paths of Beth and Aleph are primarily paths of energy descent. The Thirteenth Path, like the Twenty-fifth Path, can be a path of trial. The student who travels unswervingly along this longest of paths toward the ultimate goal of Kether can sometimes experience sensations of futility, isolation, and loneliness in the long stretches when the goal seems to be nowhere in sight.

The Path of Gimel represents the purest root-essence of consciousness, often symbolized by water. The "Uniting Intelligence" knows and sees all. It is pure mental energy operating at the unconscious level. Its essence saturates all things in the universe, yet it remains unchanged by anything it touches. The Thirteenth Path is the primary regulator of the divine life-force as it flows down the Tree in vibratory "waves" of energy, which become ever more dense.

In traveling this path, the student attempts to unte the human part of the self to the divine part. Here the student also learns about the processes of memory (subconscious recall) and reflection (man as the counterpart of the divine). Although this path may be a long ordeal, when it is finally accomplished, the ultimate initiation takes place.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF GIMEL

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Yesod to Tiphareth, and continues on the Path of Gimel, where he must cross a vast desert on the back of a camel. He experiences another "Dark Night of the Soul." *Path Symbol: A* silver crescent ☽.

You formulate the astral temple of Malkuth and intone the appropriate divine names. Sandalphon emerges and you exchange the Projection Sign and the Sign of Silence with her. When she asks why you have come to the temple of Malkuth, you hold up the sil-ver crescent. The archangel escorts you up the Path of Tau to Yesod. You continue up the Path of Samekh to Tiphareth.

The six-sided temple of Tiphareth surrounds you—draped in yellow and illuminated by six large candlesticks, with a large hexagram engraved in both ceiling and floor. You announce your presence in the temple by vibrating the divine names which call forth its inhabitants: *YHVH Eloah Ve-Daath, Raphael,* and *Melakim.*

The archangel Raphael appears in all his golden radiance. He asks you: "You have entered the abode of the Ruach and the Holy Guardian Angel. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer, "By the symbol of the Silver Crescent."

Raphael gives a nod of satisfaction. He takes you east of the temple and draws back a portion of the yellow drapery to reveal a blue archway bearing a white letter Gimel on its keystone. Within the arch is a veil with the tarot image of *The High Priestess* painted on it. The archangel traces the symbol of Luna ☽ in the air before the archway and the veil evaporates. In its place is a door carved out of moonstone. Holding up the silver crescent, you trace the figure of the letter Gimel before the door, which dissolves. Stepping through the portal, you enter the Thirteenth Path. As you do so, you hear the voice of Raphael as he speaks to you:

"It is written: 'It is not from man to man that the great gifts are communicated, for that which he can give to another is that only which a man can spare from himself. It is for this reason that, after solidarity and brotherhood, each of us stands alone.'[1] Know that All *is* One."

You step out into a grassy field bordered by fruit- and nut-bearing trees. The sun overhead is brilliant, and the air is sweetly scented with jasmine. You walk toward a gently sloped hill that rises in the east. A sandy path leads over the hill, and you take it, leaving the valley behind.

The hill appears to go on indefinitely. The more you walk uphill, the farther away the hilltop appears. The heat of the sun is severe. With firm resolve you press on, but it seems to take an extraordinary amount of time to reach the summit.

At length you arrive at the top of the hill, exhausted and thirsty. You look out over a vast, high desert plateau where there is nothing to see but endless miles of sand dunes. The path continues to the east—it is faint, but still visible. Determined to cross the desert, you start down the trail. After walking for what seems to be miles, you begin to wonder if maybe this journey wasn't such a good idea after all. There is nothing here for you to eat or drink, not even a cactus to cut open and drink bitter juices from. It is late afternoon now, and the sun's power is dying but relentless. You feel it drain your energy as you begin to tire. Each step becomes more and more difficult. Exhaustion sets in and you stumble from weariness, landing face first in the sand.

Suddenly, you hear a noise and feel hot breath on the back of your neck. You look up into the soft brown eyes of a camel; its bridle straps rubbing your arm. Grabbing the leather straps, you pull yourself to your feet. The camel is equipped with an ornate saddle of blue and silver leather covered in moonstones and pearls. Grateful to have been mysteriously provided with a means of transportation, you climb into the saddle and continue your journey eastward as the sun gradually sets behind you.

The animal sets a steady, reassuring pace. It seems to know exactly where it is going. As the day fades into night, the camel's hooves almost appear as if they hardly touch the ground at all-they glide over the sand.

In the failing light, you see that the path ends at the edge of a cliff. The camel picks up its pace and gallops toward the cliff that overlooks a huge gaping chasm. The other side of the Abyss is concealed

in the oncoming darkness. Without slowing, the camel takes a great leap off the edge of the crevasse into absolute darkness.

Time seems to be suspended in that leap. You are uncertain whether a second, a few minutes, or several hours have passed. The only thing you are certain of is the blackness that surrounds you. You cannot even see the carnel beneath you. Both you and the animal seem to be weightless, as if floating in slow motion through deep space. The world you used to know seems light years away.

Without warning, time speeds up again. You land on the other side of the chasm, but the camel does not even break its stride. It is still night, but no longer completely dark. The bright full moon overhead illuminates the sand dunes. The camel gallops across the desert at breakneck speed. Gradually, the fiat desert landscape gives way to rolling hills and forests. A stream appears ahead, its water sparkling in the moonlight. You dismount to take a long, cool drink of pure water. Revived, you climb back up on the camel, which walks at a casual pace up the middle of stream toward the water's source.

Ahead there is a small temple. It appears to be constructed in the Hellenic style, but carved completely from moonstone. A great crescent-shaped row of columns flank the entrance on either side, enclosing the headwaters of the stream that flow out of an aqueduct just under the pearl steps that lead up to the entrance of the sanctuary.

The camel stops at the foot of the building. You dismount and walk up the steps into the main temple chamber. There is no source of illumination in the room other than the bright full moon—its light permitted to enter through a ceiling that is open to the sky. There are two great columns, one of moonstone and the other of obsidian. Before them is a square pool of pure water, the source of the stream outside. Selene, the bright moon, is reflected in the waters of this pool, and her light is refracted—it dances off the surface of the water to form graceful currents of iridescence that caress the walls and the columns of the chamber. In the east of the temple, you notice the stylized image of a star engraved on the wall. Outside of these simple, yet potent symbols, the temple is empty. You sit down by the pool and stare into the water.

You are suddenly gripped by a terrible feeling of loneliness and despair. Is this it, you wonder? All this way for a temple, a moonlit pool, and a drawing of a star? Shouldn't there be more? Where are the gods and goddesses, the knights and the prophets, the legends and stories that illustrated the previous paths? Even Selene, the goddess of the bright moon, whom you encountered briefly on an earlier path, is silent now. The paths that you explored in the middle realms of the Tree never left you with such feelings of spiritual desolation. You are filled with self-doubt about why you are even attempting to scale the Tree of Life. You question all your motives, your accomplishments, and even your most strongly held spiritual beliefs. Never have you felt more empty or more alone. Overcome by sorrow, you bury your face in your hands as tears stream down your face, and your body is wracked with sobs.



Figure 42: The Moon

Salty tears fall into the pool of water where they turn into pearls. You cry until you have exhausted all feelings of sadness and despair. A sense of calm returns, and as you look up, wiping away the last of the tears, you see that the bottom of the pool is covered with pearls. The eastern wall of the temple now appears transparent—open to the starry horizon. Where there was once a drawing of a star, there is now a real star, or rather, a cluster of stars—a spiral galaxy. You watch the galaxy spinning slowly and gracefully. You hear the voice of.Selene, the bright moon, finally speaking to you from the canas of the night sky. Looking up at the moon, you see the head of a woman entirely hidden by a veil.

"Can your tears prevail against the tide of the sea?" she asks. "Your might against the waves of the Storm? Your love against all the sorrows of the world? The Path of Gimel passes through Daath, the higher arc of Yesod. It is written 'In Daath the Depths are broken up and the clouds drop down dew.'[2]

"This is the initiation which no mortal being can offer. This is the final purification that no earthly water can bestow. It has been called a Dark Night of the Soul. Could the path that leads to the experience of the final union with God be any less? Could any vestige of impurity survive such an ascent? All must be let go. All must be released. Here the soul is purged of all imperfection. It is secretly taught the unity of the divine love, without conscious understanding of the manner of teaching. The blemishes of the soul are shed like tears into the primal sea. They are the pearls of growth. For nothing here is as it seems, or as you imagined it to be."

The image of the veiled woman fades into the luminary of the moon. The eastern wall of the temple has become solid again, displaying the drawing of the star. You do not understand everything that was revealed to you. Perhaps you are not meant to understand more than a glimpse of this most potent path. Perhaps it is not possible for a living being to understand more. Either way, you have a sense that something profound has happened to you here. On a level that you don't profess to understand, you have a deep sense of spiritual clarity.

Your journey on the Path of Gimel has reached its completion. Climbing back up on the camel, you return to the temple of

Tiphareth, where you leave your mount and are greeted by the archangel Raphael. Then you descend the Path of Samekh to Yesod and from there you continue down the Path of Tau to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon secures the portal of Tau. You salute the archangel of Malkuth with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.



The Seventeenth Path of Zayin

> *The Seventeenth Path is the Disposing Intelligence, which provides Faith to the Righteous, and they are clothed with the Holy Spirit by it, and it is called the Foundation of Excellence in the state of higher things.*

This path "disposes" (arranges, prepares, or readies) the Righteous by providing them with Faith. The "Disposing Intelligence" implies that this path gives constant adjustment, preparation, measurement, judgment, and organization to the individual human soul in order to make it ready for the final leap over the Abyss. At the summit of this path is Binah, the sphere of the Holy Spirit. Those who are truly fit to undertake this path are said to be "clothed with the Holy Spirit." Through the Seventeenth Path, Tiphareth, the seat of the Ruach (rational soul) and the Higher Self, is joined to Binah, the seat of the Neshamah (divine soul) and the subconscious mind. The joining of the influences of these two Sephiroth along this path results in its title of "the Foundation of Excellence in the state of higher things."

The Hebrew letter Zayin means "sword," a weapon that cuts and severs (or divides). It is that type of god-energy that governs the process of separation. As stated earlier, division is method of creation. Therefore, this is the path where the descending divine life-force begins creation through division.

For the student who is ascending this path, a direct reversal of this process takes place. The separateness of the individual is dissolved into the unified whole of the divine. Duality is sacrificed. The various segments of the psyche (animus and anima, Ruach

and Neshamah) become as one. The Path of Zayin implies a period of self-analysis, followed by the disposal of those elements of the psyche which are impure, and the "arrangement" of those elements that are pure, until at length the component parts of the revitalized psyche is recombined into a greater unity. The result is intimacy and oneness with the divine.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF ZAYIN

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Yesod to Tiphareth, and continues on the Path of Zayin where he encounters a woman divining with tarot cards. He witnesses the Greek hero Perseus rescuing Andromeda from a sea serpent. *Path Symbol:* A sword j.

The astral temple of Malkuth forms around you as you vibrate the appropriate divine names. When the archangel of Malkuth appears, you exchange the Projection Sign and the Sign of Silence with her. Sandalphon inquires about the nature of your journey and you hold up the sword. The archangel leads you up the Path of Tau to Yesod, and from there you continue up the Path of Samekh to Tiphareth.

You call forth the inhabitants of the six-sided temple by intoning the names *YHVH Eloah Ve-Daath, Raphael,* and *Melakim.* The archangel Raphael emerges from the yellow drapery in the east as though he just stepped out of a renaissance painting. He questions you: "By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer, "By the symbol of the sword."

Raphael nods. He takes you to the east of the temple and draws back a portion of the yellow drapery to reveal an orange archway bearing a white letter Zayin on its keystone. Within the arch is a veil with the tarot image of *The Lovers* painted on it. The archangel traces the symbol of Gemini II in the air before the archway and the veil evaporates. In its place is a door carved from tourmaline. Holding up the sword, you trace the letter Zayin T

before the door, which dissolves. Stepping through the portal, you enter the Seventeenth Path.

You step out into a rocky cliff overlooking the sea. Huge boulders dot the shoreline like megaliihs—silent, brooding guardians of the portal between land and sea. You begin down the craggy trail that meanders between the great stones of the sea cliffs.

Soon you see a dark-haired woman dressed in a simple orange tunic, sitting on a blanket near the path. She shuffles a deck of tarot cards and lays them out bef ore her in a spread that you do not recognize. She picks up the central card—the tarot trump of The Lovers. Without looking up from the cards, the woman offers you an interpretation:

"The legend of the Dioscuri, or the 'sons of Zeus,' tells us that a mortal woman, Leda, gave birth to the twins, Castor and Pollux. Castor was the mortal son of Leda's husband, Tyndareus, but Pollux was the immortal son of the god Zeus. Castor was killed in battle and his immortal brother wept over Hm. 'Father,' he prayed to Zeus. 'Let me not outlive my beloved brother!' Pollux refused immortality unless Caster could share in it. Thus he was permitted by Zeus to descend into the underworld of Hades and spend half of his time there, sharing his immortality, his divine spark, with Castor. Each continued to live on alternating days. Touched by this display of fraternal devotion, Zeus placed them both in the heavens, forever united in the constellation of Gemini. Thus showing that divine love is the means by

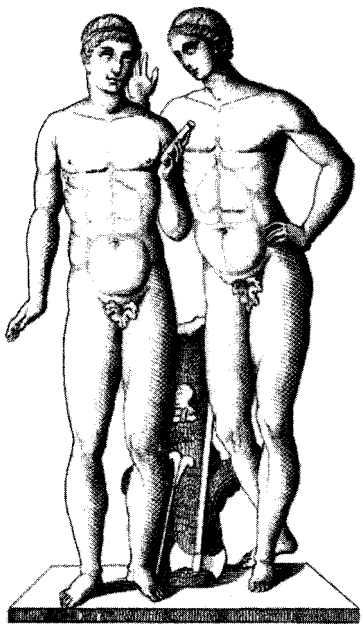


Figure 43: The Dioscuri

which humanity may reach the stars."

The woman looks up at you with eyes that are dark, sharp, and clear:

"Everything that you call 'life,"energy,' and 'substance,' is a duality," she tells you. "Everything has a tendency to return to Unity. All desire and therefore all suffering originates from duality. Rise aboye the state of condensation. Let thy aspiration be for enlightenment."[3]

You look at the card of The Lovers that the woman holds in her hand. In it you see an image of yourself, or rather, two copies of yourself: a positive image and a photo-negative image. The two versions of yourself stand facing each other but are separated by a wall of smoky glass. Then the vision fades.

You thank the woman for the reading, but she seems to ignore you, reshuffles the cards, and continues to divine. You pass her by and resume your journey.

The rocky path is very rough in places, but eventually it evens out as it descends along the sandy shoreline. The mixture of sun and sea, together with the large rocky outcroppings that accent the beach, leaves you feeling good, as if you were just strolling along an average beach enjoying the weather. The path hads down to a narrow spit of land that extends far out into the sea. You follow the land bridge out—a tenuous umbilical cord stretched out into the ocean and your only link back to dry land. The sea surrounds you on both sides of the spit.

At length you come to the end of the spit. A few yards beyond the end of the land is a large rock. As you draw closer to it, you see what appears to be the naked figure of a woman. She is extremely beautiful—her pale skin shines like silver. But she is obviously in distress. Her hands are chained aboye her head to a metal ring firmly embedded in the rock. She cries out in pain and despair as she feebly struggles to free herself. You are about to plunge into the water and swim out to the rock, when a large, black, reptilian head breaks the surface of the water. Two more monstrous, scaly heads appear from beneath the waves. It is then that you realize that the three heads are all attached to one body. The triple-headed sea monster spits water and hisses at you. It has no intention of letting you deprive it of its meal. The beast turns to swim toward its helpless prey.

Your own intuition whispers the story that is unfolding before you. The woman bound to the rock is Andromeda, daughter of

King Cepheus of Ethiopia. Her mother, Cassiopeia, offended the Nereids, or ocean nymphs, by proclaiming that she was more beautiful than they. The Nereids complained to the god Poseidon, who sent a sea monster to ravage the region. The Oracle of Amon told king Cepheus that his kingdom would be destroyed unless his daughter was sacrificed to the serpent. The king's subjects chained Andromeda to the rock to be devoured by the monster.

All of a sudden you look up to see a man descending through the air like lightning in a brilliant halo of light. It is Perseus, the son of the god Zeus and the woman Danaé. His golden, muscular body displays the attitude of a warrior. Winged sandals give him the ability to fly, and he wears the dark helmet of invisibility that belonged to Hades, giving him the advantage of stealth. Perseus is struck by the beauty of Andromeda—he is moved by compassion and love to save her. With shield and sword raised for battle, the hero swiftly plunges toward the sea. With a single stroke he severs one of the serpent's heads, then takes to the sky again for another pass at the monster. The other two heads writhe in pain as the sea churras crimson with blood. The son of Zeus cuts through the air like a missile and slices through another reptilian head. With his final assault, the third head is cut off. The four pieces of the serpent thrash about in the red foam before finally disappearing under the waves.

The golden hero descends to the captive woman on the rock. Raising one hand to touch Andromeda's silvery face, Perseus kisses her softly, then steps back to swing his blade. In one stroke his sword cuts through the metal ring that binds her to the stone. Her shattered chains fall to the ground. With their arms entwined around each other, they rise up, ascending into the azure sky until they are no longer visible to you.

In your mind's eye you again see a double image of yourself as portrayed in the tarot card of The Lovers: a positive image and a negative image of yourself separated by a wall of glass. The partition vanishes and the two forms merge finto one. Then the unified form of yourself is enveloped in a halo of brilliant white light.

Your journey on the Path of Zayin has reached its completion. Walking back along the narrow spit of land to the shore, you return to the temple of Tiphareth, where you are greeted by the archangel

Raphael. From there you descend the Path of Samekh to Yesod and continue down the Path of Tau to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon seals the portal behind you. You salute the archangel of Malkuth with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.



The Eighteenth Path of,Cheth

> *The Eighteenth Path is called the Intelligence or House of Influence (by the greatness of whose abundance the influence of good things upon created beings is increased), and from its midst the arcana and hidden senses are drawn forth, which dwell in its shade and which cling to it, from the Causes of all causes.*

The "House of Influence" is the same as the "House of the Holy Spirit," which conducts to Binah the maternal sphere of "abundance" through which "the influx of good things upon created beings is increased." From its station aboye the Abyss, Binah is "hidden" to us, but its unseen influences are "drawn forth" through the Eighteenth Path to Geburah. The "shade" or shadow refers to the wings of the Holy One who protects and shelters us. ("Under the shadow of Thy wings, O Tetragrammaton.") As one of the three Supernals, the hidden influences "which cling to it" are closely connected to Kether, the "Cause of all causes."

The Hebrew letter Cheth means "fence" or "enclosure," which indicates the hidden nature of this path, as well as the idea of "containment." The containment referred to here is the diverse methods for organizing consciousness finto forms that we can comprehend on a deep level. It represents a type of unconscious understanding that cannot be communicated by words—it is therefore "hidden" to all attempts by the conscious mirad to define it in human language.

The idea of the "fence" in Cheth includes the image of the field that it enloses; they are not separate here. Division is useful to tell one thing apart from another thing—this is the basis of all conscious constructs of education and civilization. Division is a process of creation and growth (just as a cell divides and becomes two). However, Cheth teaches us not to become trapped in these

divisions, because they are merely tools that help facilitate our understanding. Ultimate reality has no such divisions.

Seekers on the Eighteenth Path must realize that the outer form of the human being is, in reality, a container (Cheth) for the spirit or divine essence. Since *we* are the vessels that the divine spirit chooses to inhabit, it is important that we dedicate all aspects of ourselves toward eventual reunification with our eternal source. We must be receptive to the energies of the divine. When this reunion is finally achieved, we will come to realize that there was no true separation in the first place.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF CHETH

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Yesod, Tiphareth, and Geburah before journeying up the path of Cheth where he encounters various images associated with skrying and clairvoyance. He finds himself in ancient Chaldea where he encounters a Hebrew priest who performs a ritual meditation for entering into a visionary experience. *Path Symbol: A* triple enclosure .[4]

As you begin to formulate the temple of Malkuth, you vibrate the appropriate divine names. Sandalphon appears and you exchange the signs with her. When she asks why you have come to her abode this time, you hold up the triple enclosure. Sandalphon escorts you up the Path of Tau to Yesod. You continue up the Path of Samekh to the temple of Tiphareth and from there you travel up the Path of Lamed to the sphere of Geburah. You enter the fire temple giving the Projection Sign. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

The pentagonal temple draped in red tapestries meets your eyes. Once again you notice the ruby ceiling and floor, both of which are inlaid with pentagrams. *A* hint of tobacco is in the air, and the central altar flame scintillates with light.

You vibrate the divine names of this Sephirah: *Elohim Gibor, Khamael,* and *Seraphim.* The archangel Khamael steps forth from the

east like a medieval knight ready for battle, ciad in red armor from crown to heel. He addresses you:

"Behold the sphere of energy and purification. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the symbol of the triple enclosure."

Khamael nods: "The triple square bisected by the cross representa the containment and foundation of the triad. It is a worthy symbol for the Path of Cheth."

Khamael leads you to the east of the temple and draws back a portion of the red tapestry to reveal a yellow-orange archway bearing a white letter Cheth on its keystone. Within the arch is a veil with the tarot image of *The Chariot* painted on it. The archangel traces the symbol of Cancer 5 in the air before the archway, and the veil fades into mist. In its place is a door carved from amber. Holding up the symbol of the triple enclosure, you trace the letter Cheth R before the door, which dissolves. Stepping through the portal, you enter the Eighteenth Path, and step out into an expanse of churning black clouds. You hear the voice of Khamael speaking to you: "It is written: '1 was clothed with the covering of thy Spirit."'[5]

You see nothing in the black morass of clouds. Then a series of images comes into view. The first is a clear quartz crystal tumbling end over end. Then you see a crystal ball of pure smoky quartz. This is followed by a mirror of polished black glass set in a wooden frame with symbols carved into it. These images fade in to the blackness, but they are followed by the image of a white dove surrounded by a stone fence or enclosure. Then the dove ignites and becomes a flaming white letter Shin t 7. The stone fence enclosing the Shin takes on the shape of a human body. Finally, you see your own face reflected in a still pool of water.

You find yourself walking near the banks of a river in the ancient land of Chaldea. The path leads away from the river to a rocky knoll. On top of the knoll you see a solitary figure. Drawing closer you see that it is a bearded man dressed in the robes of a Hebrew priest. He appears to be in the middle of a ceremony. A large rock serves as his altar. On it he has placed an altar cloth and a bowl of burning incense. The man stands with upraised arms. He weaves back and forth slightly as he intones several divine names



Figure 44: Ezekiel's Vision

associated with the ten Sephiroth. He petitions the Elohim to grant him a holy vision—a sign of power that might help rally the exiled people of Israel and establish a new covenant between them and God. It is then that you learn the priest's name: Ezekiel.

You observe the priest for some time as he continues his prayers and meditations. You feel a kind of watchful tension or suspense—a brooding presence. It is as though you are waiting for something that seems strangely near yet concealed.

The priest begins to vibrate a series of permutations involving the letters of the Tetragrammaton, YHVH, combined with the five primary vowel sounds. He moves his head in a different motion for each vowel, and he takes a specific number of rhythmic breaths between each permutation.[6]

Oblivious to your presence, the priest manipulates the wording of his chants—he changes the speed, rhythm, and volume of the permutations. He works himself into a trance state, and his eyes begin to glaze over. When his energy has reached its highest level, he falls to his knees and looks toward the north.

You shift your gaze to the northern sky to see what the priest is looking at and see a massive storm cloud building with unusual speed. Bolts of lightning and even orbs of ball lightning lash out in all directions, punctuated by the rumblings of thunder. Then the center of the storm cell erupts forth like the pyroclastic explosion of a volcano. A brilliant flame bursts out of the clouds, and in the middle of these a white light appears, surrounded by a brazen aura. Four radiant figures or angels form in the middle of the light. In appearance, these holy living creatures resemble the Kerubim of Yesod. Each of the four figures has the body of a man, but with four faces—that of a lion, an eagle, a man, and a bull. Each has four wings—one pair of wings covers each creature's body, and one pair stretches upward from the creature's shoulders. The four angels stand together in a tight formation, wingtip to wingtip, and flashes of lightning dart between each figure. The sound of their wings in motion is deafening.

Before your eyes, four circular shapes manifest beneath the creatures. They appear to be golden wheels, which glitter like gemstones. The four wheels all turn in one direction, yet inside the rim

of each wheel is a smaller wheel that turns in a different direction—the outer wheel rotates from east to west, while the smaller wheel rotates from north to south. You realize that the wheels are alive, and that they have eyes all around their rims. The holy living creatures and the wheels seem to share the same consciousness, the same divine spirit.

As if this sight were not remarkable enough, the clouds aboye the angels split open with the sound of a thousand thunders to reveal the starry vault of.the heavens. A great throne of pure sapphire appears in the sky over the heads of the holy creatures, and seated on that throne is an image of a glorious and holy being—a human figure completely formed from living fire. A perfect rainbow of iridescent color completely encircles the deity. This is the image of YHVH Elohim, the Lord God, Most High.

You hear a voice speaking to Ezekiel, the priest, in his native tongue, and you are certain that the message he hears is meant for him. At the same time, you hear a voice speaking to you, relaying a message that is meant for you. The voice speaks:

"It is written: 'I went up to the light of Truth as if into a chariot. And the Truth took me and led me and carried me across pits and gullies; and from the rocks and the waves it preserved me. It became to me a haven of liberation and set me on the arms of immortal life. It went with me and suffered me not to wander, because it was the Truth, and error flees away from it, and meets it not. But the Truth proceeds in the right path, and whatever I did not know, it made clear to me.'[7]

"Who can write the Psalms of Adonai, or who can read them? Who can train his soul for life, that his soul may be liberated? Who is able to interpret the wonders of Adonai? For he who could interpret would be dissolved, and would become that which is interpreted."[8]

The voice stops speaking to you but images continue to fill your mind. You visualize the image of a stone wall encircling a city, a sphinx, and a sleeping king surrounded by treasure. You let the images flow into your consciousness without trying to overanalyze them.

After some period of time, the message is finished. The image of YHVH Elohim is obscured as the storm clouds move in to close the

window into the heavens. The holy living creatures and the wheels begin to fade as the thunderclouds withdraw to the northern sky. Then the clouds fold back in on themselves and disappear.

The priest Ezekiel is moved to tears by his experience. He finishes the ceremony with a prayer of thanks, gathers up his altar cloth and incense, and begins down the path that leads back to the settlement. He will record his vision and the message he was given so others might benefit from it. You resolve to meditate on the message that you viere given so that you might understand it better.

Your journey into the Path of Cheth is finished. You quickly descend to the temple of Geburah and follow the Path of Lamed back to Tiphareth. Taking the Path of Samekh, you descend to Yesod, and from there you traverse the path of Tau into Malkuth. The archangel Sandalphon seals the door behind you. Facing the portal to the waking world, you give the Projection Sign and step through to the physical realm. Once you reach the other side, you give the Sign of Silence.

~

Binah

Although wisdom is the quality of Chokmah, understanding is assigned to the third Sephirah of Binah. Wisdom alludes to complete and infinite knowledge, while understanding imparts the notion of an ability to grasp the ideas that are intrinsic to wisdom. The understanding of Binah is the divine understanding of what difficulties and hardships have to teach us in life. However, true understanding of Binah and the other Supernals is beyond the capabilities of our conscious minds.

Binah is the feminine counterpart of Chokmah. This sphere is situated at the summit of the left-hand pillar on the Tree of Life. Binah is the Supernal Mother, *Aima,* the great negative or feminine force. (By negative we mean receptive in a purely scientific way, like the positive and negative parts of an atom, not as a value judgment.) Positive and negative are inseparable properties; one cannot properly function without the other. Receptivity is a feminine function and, just as

in the case of Chokmah's masculinity, we are referring to sexual functions in the most basic and unmanifest of concepts. Chokmah, the Sephirah of duality, by necessity overflows finto a third sphere in order for another natural polarity to occur.

The *Sepher Yetzirah* states this about Binah:

> *The Third Path is the Sanctifying Intelligence, and it is the foundation of Primordial Wisdom, which is called the Creator of Faith, and its roots are AMN; and it is the parent of Faith, from which doth Faith emanate.*

Here the Yetziratic text implies that Binah is still in a hallowed or blessed state because it remains aboye the Abyss in an unmanifest condition. Sanctification expresses the idea of that which is holy and set apart. It is given the title "Primordial Wisdom," because it is the primary source of organization at this stage of divine emanation where a distinct polarity has been defined on the Tree of Life. Binah is here referred to as the "Creator of Faith." Faith rests on understanding, whose parent is Binah. Faith is also defined as belief and veneration, but in the light of mystical consciousness, faith can be defined as the conscious result of superconscious experience. By this we mean true spiritual faith—not faith in religious dogma. The average personality is not aware of this faith, but is nonetheless affected and modified by it, possibly with great feeling and emotional intensity. The statement that the roots of Binah are in AMN (Amen meaning "firm," "faithful," and "so be it") refers to Kether. This clearly indicates that although Binah issues from Chokmah, the source of ultimate faith or truth is from the crown of Kether.

Binah is the great organizer and form-builder of the universe. Binah takes the raw energy from Chokmah and begins to organize it hito form. This is the sphere of patience, limitation, and time, as well as the sphere of creation. Binah is said to be the great archetypal feminine or maternal force of the universe. Saturn, the planet of time and restriction, is attributed to this Sephirah. Binah completes the triad of the Supernals.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO BINAH

Summary: The student journeys from Malkuth to Yesod and Tiphareth. From there he travels the Seventeenth Path of Zayin to the temple of Binah. He encounters the archangel Tzaphqiel and the angelic choir known as the Erelim. He finds himself being pushed through a tunnel and in the company of the goddess Isis, who is pregnant with the child Horus. *Binah Symbol:* The Vesica Piscis 09

Gaining entry into the temple of Malkuth, you give the appropriate signs. Wasting no time, Sandalphon takes you up the Path of Tau to Yesod. From there you ascend the Path of Samekh to Tiphareth. Then you rise up the Path of Zayin.

You find yourself standing at the end of the Seventeenth Path, facing the door to the astral temple of Binah. A large black door is before you. Carved into this door is the Hebrew letter Beth] painted in white. Giving the Projection Sign, you step through the door into the third Sephirah. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

The temple of Binah is a dark chamber full of mystery. You cannot even see the walls, the ceiling, or the floor of the sanctuary since the boundaries of the room are hidden by an enigmatic veil of blackness. The air is scented with myrrh, and the only thing you can see is the central altar, made of pure onyx, on which are three white candles, a white triangle, and a bowl carved from pearl containing the central flame of the temple. The temple flame, along with the three white candles, are the only sources of illumination in the sanctuary, but their individual lights are surrounded by a hazy aura which does not penetrate far into the overwhelming darkness of the chamber. There is an odd, pulsating heaviness to this place.

You vibrate the divine name which awakens the inhabitants of Binah, *YHVH Elohim,* and the name of the archangel *Tzaphqiel.* Then you call on the order of angels known as the *Erelim.*

A dark form slowly materializes just east of the altar. You can barely make out the figure of a woman dressed in black robes, her face completely covered by a black veil. Great, black rayen wings hover over her shoulder—the feathers shimmering like gasoline on water. Tzaphqiel, the "beholder of God," speaks to you in a hypnotic, alto voice:

"You have entered the realm of the Sanctifying Intelligence. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the symbol of the Vesica Piscis, the pointed oval."

Tzaphqiel responds: "The Vesica is a symbol of the aura, but its shape also suggests the female vulva, the sheath of reproduction through which all new life pass into physical form. It is a worthy symbol for the sphere of Aima Elohim."

Tzaphqiel directs your attention to the temple flame on the altar. The fire blazes suddenly and the room around you becomes translucent. The sanctuary fades from view. It is replaced by absolute darkness. You hear the voice of the archangel addressing you:

"It is written: 'Thou canst not pass from concealment unto manifestation save by the virtue of the Elohim. Before all things are the chaos and the darkness and the gates of the land of night. I am she whose name is darkness.'"[10]

Complete blackness. For one brief moment you see the image of the Eye of Horus . Then all becomes dark again.

You see nothing, but you hear the sounds of water, the sounds of ocean waves gently pounding out a relaxing rhythm. You also feel a rocking motion, as if you were in a small boat. Gradually the scene is illuminated. You find yourself lying curled up in a canoe in the middle of the sea. Pulling yourself into a sitting position, you gaze up at the sliver of the sun, a thin fine of golden light created between the horizon and the clouds.

Standing aboye the water are several winged, human-like figures. They are faceless and their bodies appear to be completely composed of brilliant white flames. One of their number floats across the water toward you. The figure speaks to you in a familiar alto voice, and you recognize her as the archangel of Binah in her persona as *Tzaphqiel Erelel,* ruler of the angelic host of the third Sephirah. Tzaphqiel speaks:

"We are the Erelim, the Valiant Ones and the Thrones—seats of divine power. We are the order of angels associated with the sphere of Binah, the sphere of form and limitation, yet we are also an active power that counters the forces of imbalance and evil. We are the upholders of form, receptivity, and stability, providing the

essence of structure to things. We are the reservoirs of spiritual power—seats of containment—stabilizing and regulating energy so it may be used in ways that áre controlled and directed."

Tzaphqiel continues: "We are the Watchers of God, the observing eye within you, silently surveying the depth of your understanding. We are the seers of secret thoughts. Wisdom depends on understanding, just as awareness depends on observation. Understanding is the realm of the great mother, the divine feminine. And we aid the archetypal feminine in the manifestation of her presence through intuition, perception, and organization of form. For none shall reach the Father save through the Mother.

"Oh vastness wherein all the rivers of being seek to lose themselves. Oh Mother of Mothers. Oh Archetype eternal of maternity and love. The waters of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God!"[11]

Tzaphqiel moves closer. The flaming white archangel holds up her hand, and you see a black, upright triangle in the middle of her hand. She places it against your forehead. You see the image of a large single eye opening suddenly. The sensation of the eye opening shoots through you like an electrical shock. Then absolute blackness returns and you feel yourself moving downward. You see the image of an hourglass tumbling end over end, and you hear the voice of Tzaphqiel reciting an invocation: "Mother of the gods, great nurse of all draw near. Thou who art the mother of thy father and the daughter of thy son! From thee the sea and every river flows. Celestial, ancient, life-supporting maid. Inspiring queen, give thy supplicant aid. Mother of the gods, draw near!"[12]

You find yourself being slowly pushed through a dark, narrow tunnel. It is hot and moist. Somewhere in the distance, you hear a woman crying. You are pushed along for what seems to be several minutes.

Then it stops. It is daylight, and you find yourself in the middle of a patch of papyrus reeds on a small island in the middle of the Nile River. A small shrine sits on a hill in the center of the island. You walk up to the temple where a great goddess is seated on a throne, fast asleep. Her blue robes and golden headdress are familiar to you. Isis, the goddess of heaven, more radiant than a thousands suns, is

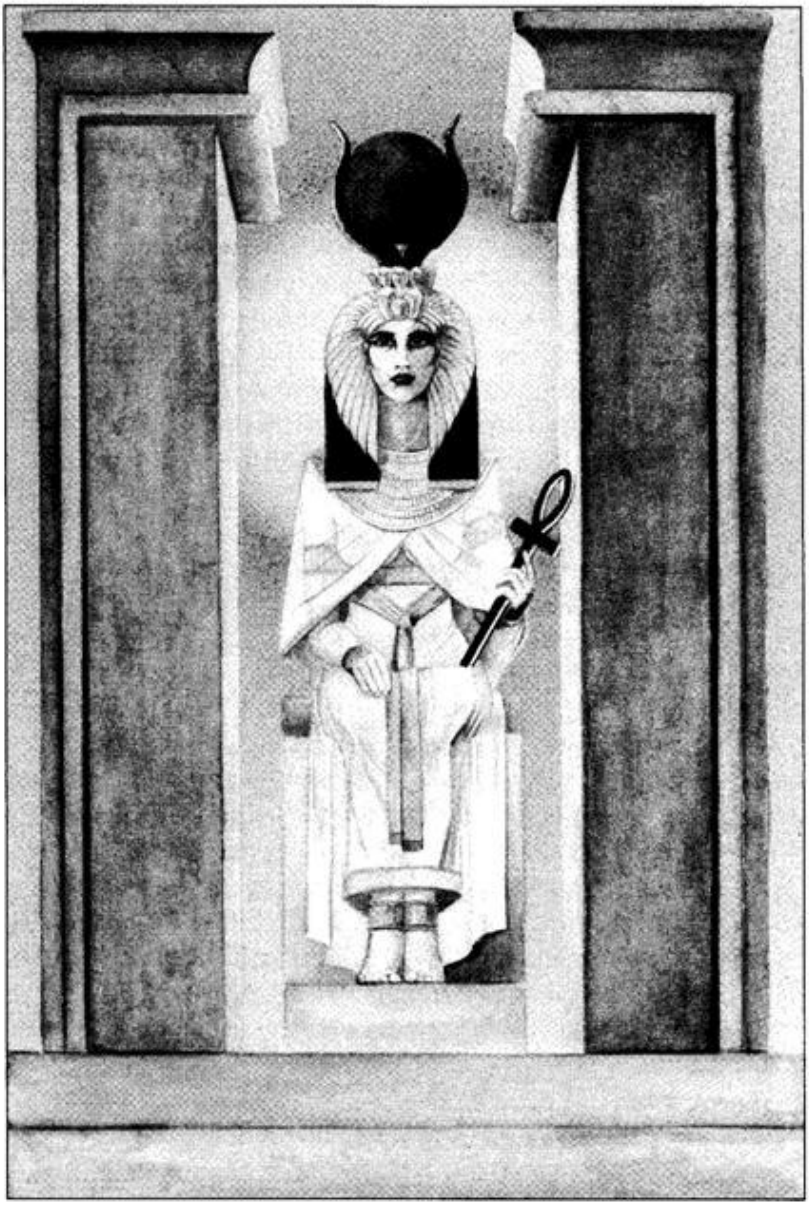


Figure 45: Isis

pregnant. She has conceived a child from the seed of her dead husband, the god Osiris. But the land of Egypt is suffering under the tyrannical rule of the evil god Set, who murdered Osiris and assumed the throne. Isis dreams of giving birth to a savior who will recover his divine inheritance and restore the rightful order of the world. The child stirs within her and she wakes.

Realizing that she is about to give birth, Isis calls out:

"Listen, O gods! I am Isis, sister of Osiris, who wept for the father of the gods, for Osiris, whose fate began the time of carnage in the Two Lands. The seed of the god is in my body. And 1 have formed the body of a god. When born, he shall rule over this land. He shall inherit the patrimony of Geb, speak up for his father, and slay Set, his father's enemy.

"Come O gods! Protect him while he is in my womb. One day he will be the lord of the gods, this god who is yet an embryo, so still and unformed. Keep him safe, for he is the heir to Osiris."

Overhead, the disk of the sun speaks to the goddess Isis with the voice of Re-Atum, the god of destiny. "Let not the god Set who slew his father draw near to the child inside of Isis! The master of the house of primeval forms has spoken." Atum then addresses the unborn child within Isis: "Come! Appear upon the world!"[13]

There is a flash of light. In your mind's eye you receive an image of an egg. The egg breaks open, and a golden falcon flies out of it and rises into the sky.

In another brilliant flash of light the image of the falcon disappears. Before you, the goddess Isis is seated on her throne, and on her lap is a golden child with a single lock of hair hanging to one side of his head. The child wears the dual *Skhenet* crown, a symbol of the two lands of Egypt, the Upper and Lower Kingdoms united. Harpocrates—Horus the Child—looks at you with the matured wisdom of a king, and the pure understanding of a child. Then he places one of his fingers to his lips and gives the Sign of Silence.

The vision fades into blackness. Once again you find yourself in the astral temple of Binah, facing the black-veiled archangel Tzaphqiel across the onyx altar. You thank her for showing you these

images, but she only nods. Without a word the archangel steps backward into the dark atmosphere of the sanctuary and disappears.

Then you quickly descend the Path of Zayin to Tiphareth. From there you descend the Path of Samekh to Yesod and continue down the Path of Tau to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon seals the portal behind you. You salute the archangel of Malkuth with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.



The Fifteenth Path of Heh

> *The Fifteenth Path is the Constituting Intelligence, so called because it constitutes the substance of creation in pure darkness, and men have spoken of these contemplations; it is that darkness spoken of in Scripture, Job 38:9, "and thick darkness a swaddling hand for it."*

The "substance of creation in pure darkness" refers to the creation of the world when clouds of darkness hovered over the waters of the endless ocean. The world of light was created out of the darkness of nothingness. The "Constituting Intelligence" is that which establishes, sets up, arranges, and orders the world of light—the divine life-force—that is born out of the dark womb with darkness itself as its swaddling clothes. Thus the Fifteenth Path constitutes the very structure, shape, and support of the Tree of Life. Power and energy, and their relationship to the self, is explored on this path.

The Hebrew letter Heh means "window," an opening which permits light and air into a building. The light is the light of divine wisdom, the air is the breath of the divine life-force, and the building is the house (Beth) of the Lower Self. This letter is often said to be the letter which represents life and the nature of being. Heh has an added correspondence with the faculty of sight. This "sight" implies watchfulness, investigation, and alertness. Heh is the window through which we can see the divine.

As a path of power and divine will that streams downward from the Chiah (Chokmah) to the Ruach (Tiphareth), the Fifteenth Path relates to the practice of ritual magic. The Path of Heh is the

path that establishes, arranges, and channels the divine life-forceit brings cosmic order and divine law where once there was pone. The letter Heh, a feminine letter, also defines and classifies. Students traveling this path may experience feelings of peace, order, and stability being introduced into disorderly situations. They may also start to categorize and arrange their conscious thoughts in a significant fashion. Students traveling on the Fifteenth Path should learn to depend on the divine for its organization, power, and form. They should also realize that we humans are not victims of fate, but rather, we can control our own personal destinies through better understanding of the divine will.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF HEH

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Yesod to Tiphareth, and continues on the Path of Heh. He encounters Merlin the magician and proceeds on to Camelot to speak to King Arthur of Britain. *Path Symbol:* The orb of dominion

The ten-sided chamber of Malkuth materializes around you. After you intone the usual names, Sandalphon appears and you exchange the usual signs. She inquires about your purpose in coming to her temple, and you hold up the orb of dominion. The archangel leads you quickly through the portal of Tau in the east of the temple, and up the Thirty-second Path to the astral temple of Yesod. You rapidly ascend the Path of Samekh to the hexagonal temple of Tiphareth, ornamented in golden and yellow.

You call forth the inhabitants of this temple by vibrating the names *YHVH Eloah ve-Daath, Raphael,* and *Melekim.* The archangel Raphael appears. He addresses you: "You have entered the realm of the Ruach and the mediating self. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?" he asks.

You answer, holding up the symbol: "By the orb of dominion."

Raphael is satisfied. "The globe surmounted by a cross is a symbol of monarchial power and justice. It is a worthy symbol of the Path of Heh."

Raphael leads you to a red archway in the southeast of the temple. On the keystone of the arch is the letter Heh in brilliant white. Within the archway is a veil on which is depicted the tarot image of *The Emperor.* Raphael traces the sigil of Aries ˙Y) and parts the veil, exposing a door carved from star ruby. Holding up the orb, you trace with it the letter Heh rr. The door opens, and you commence your journey on the Fifteenth Path.

You find yourself in an area of red mist. Within the mist you see the image of the Spirit wheel * . The wheel transforms into a large round table surrounded by twenty-four knights and a mighty king. Then the vision of the table dissolves, and the red mists fade.

You step out onto a road that winds its way through a rolling meadowland of rich green grasses, leading to a distant hill on which is a castle gleaming like ivory. Patches of forest fine the trail to the left, while to the right of the road are well-tended orchards of fruit trees in full blossom. Taking in the fresh and crisp air, fragrant with the scent of blooming flowers, you start up the path with a light heart. It is springtime in Camelot.

The road curves to the right and borders a small knoll. A circle of mossy megaliths surround the hill, and within the stone circle is a man in a plain finen shirt, leather trousers, and boots. A brown hooded cloak covers his head and shoulders, and he holds a knotty wooded staff carved from rowan. You draw nearer as the hooded figure turns to face the east. He pulls back the hood of his cape to reveal a bearded, masculine face. His head is covered by a green skullcap embroidered with a Celtic design. The man raises his staff toward the sky and recites a magical incantation in a language that you do not understand.

The wind suddenly picks up and there is the rumbling of thunder. An ominous gray cloud appears out of nowhere, centered over the area of the stone circle. The magician grasps his wooden staff with both hands and holds it directly over a long, flat altar stone in the middle of the circle. Then a lightning bolt rips from the sky and strikes the rowan rod. A ribbon of electricity snakes around the figure of the man, and you wonder how anyone could possibly sur-vive such a blast. The bolt of lightning passes through the staff and grounds its energy into the altar stone. Sparks and chips of rock are

blown away from the point of impact. After the strike, the gray cloud disperses as quickly as it formed. The magician's staff continues to smoke for few moments.

You enter the circle to see if the man who was just struck by lightning before your eyes is injured. He seems just fine. In fact, he seems invigorated by the experience. Looking at him more closely, you see that his appearance is that of a man in his forties, but you get the feeling that he is much, much older than what he appears to be, and that he has somehow acquired the elixir of youth.

"I am Merlin," he tells you, "magician and adviser to King Arthur of Britain, and counselor to the Fellowship of the Table Round."

He directs your attention to the altar stone that was struck by lightning. The image of a Spirit wheel has been blasted into the rock by the heat of the charge. Burn marks fan out around the Spirit wheel like blackened glories. "This is the holy symbol that inspired the establishment of that most noble Fellowship."

Merlin looks up at the clear sky and the castle on the hilltop. Then he turns to look at you with eyes that seem to enjoy every aspect and nuance of life. He sees that you carry the orb of dominion, the symbol of royalty. "If you wish to see the king," he tells you, "then follow me."

The magician leads you the rest of the way up the trail to the shining facade of the fortress. As you approach the main entrance to the castle, the drawbridge is lowered, and you step into the realm of Camelot.

Inside the city walls, the people of Camelot go about their daily business. Compared to what you know about medieval life in general, the citizens of Camelot seem to be enjoying a golden era—a time of peace and plenty. As you and your guide advance on the great hall of the King, two stalwart knights lower their lances and permit you to enter.

The great hall of Camelot is everything you imagined it to be—a large central room lined by an arcade of grand white columns inset with torches. The chamber is roofed by a cross-vaulted ceiling of white limestone. Enormous tapestries color the walls with splendid details of the adventures and exploits of King Arthur of Britain: one wall covering shows the boy-king pulling a magic sword out

of a large stone, one portrays him receiving the royal sword Excalibur from the Lady of the Lake, others depict the king as a young man battling the rebellious and independent kings of England and establishing his rule as king of all of Britain. The final scene shows him establishing the Order of the Knights of the Round Table—the very table which you see before you. A table with seats for twenty-four of the noblest knights in the land, a seat for the king, and one seat called "the Siege Perilous."[14] The shape of the table is meant to insure that none of the knights of the fellowship, when seated at it, could claim supremacy over the others.



Figure 46: King Arthur

Merlin escorts you past the Round Table to a large throne in the east. Seated on the throne is the king himself—Arthur of Britain. He is dressed in chain mail covered by a knight's tabard embroidered with the symbol of a dragon, the emblem of his family name. He wears a simple gold crown on his head, and he holds a golden scepter surrnounted by the orb of dominion. He is the absolute ruler over his earthly kingdom, but his expression displays no sign of arrogance or superiority, for he is a wise and compassionate king. He studies you with deep blue eyes framed by a rugged, bearded face.

Merlin speaks for you: "My Lord," he tells Arthur, "I present one who seeks the knowledge of dominion, and ultimately, Wisdom itself."

Arthur pauses before addressing you. "The king, whom you seek, is not to be found here. Unless you bring him with you, you will not find him. In your heart of hearts *you* are a king, as much as any monarch on his throne. It is not the throne that makes a king, but the soul of the man who sits on it. A poet once said: 'What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted? Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just, And he but naked, though locked up in steel, Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.'[15]

"A good monarch must rule the people with love, governing with the heart, not the sword. Divine law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and balance. Earthly law and order strive to be patterned on this model, but when they fails in this purpose, they become obstacles to the flow of spiritual progress. When the ruler is just, it is an honor to obey his laws. Just as the material must obey the spiritual. For there is something behind the throne greater than the king himself."

Arthur asks for your orb of dominion, the symbol of the Path of Heh. You hand it to the king. He examines the orb, and as he holds it in his hand, it glows with a golden light. Arthur hands the orb back to you. You absorb the globe into your heart center as Arthur continues:

"Elevate your entire being to reflect divine law. Increase your capacity to think, to hear, and to see. Craft your body and soul into fit instruments for the use of divine self-consciousness. Be ever in

control of your own self-power resulting from inner unification. Conquer the pains resulting therefrom.

"When the divine language is once heard within thy heart-when the king within has once obtained dominion—when thou hast passed through water and fire, and thy spirit has become the life of thy blood—then you may say: I am, I go, and I remain."[16]

Your journey on the Path of Heh has reached its completion. You thank Arthur and his adviser before leaving the great hall of Camelot. Returning the way you carne, you reach the temple of Tiphareth and are greeted by the archangel Raphael. Then you descend the Path of Samekh to Yesod and from there you continue down the Path of Tau to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon secures the portal or Tau. You salute the archangel of Malkuth with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.



The Sixteenth Path of Vav 1

> *The Sixteenth Path is the Triumphal or Eternal Intelligence, so called because it is the pleasure of the Glory, beyond which is no other Glory like to it, and it is called also the Paradise prepared for the Righteous.*

The word "Eternal" refers to the unfathomable Kether, whose energy begins to become tangible to us in the parental spheres of Chokmah and Binah, the father and mother principies. "Glory" is one of the titles of Chesed, and this path runs between Chokmah (Wisdom) and Chesed (Mercy/Greatness/Glory). "The pleasure of the Glory" refers to the harmonious influence of the divine energy as it is passed between these two similar spheres on the Pillar of Mercy. That it is the "Paradise prepared for the Righteous" indicates that this is a path of high spiritual ascension—the Paradise that is promised can only be obtained through discipline and virtue.

The Hebrew letter Vav means "nail" or "pin," a tool which fastens or joins. It also represents the conjunction "and" which points to its connecting attributes. The Sixteenth Path is a major conduit which crosses the Abyss to connect the Supernals to the rest of the

Tree. It is a path through which divine wisdom is transmitted to the lower spheres. Thus it is our connecting link to Supernal unity. The faculty of hearing is attributed to this path. This is inner hearing—the act of listening to the voice of the divine teacher within. Here, knowledge is given as a revelation, for the Path of Vav is one of initiation.

On this path we must learn to still the inner "chatter" of our minds and strain to distinguish that one true inner voice of wisdom. This means that we are to sharpen our faculty of listening whenever we engage in meditation and ritual work.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF VAV

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Yesod, Tiphareth, and Chesed and continues on the Path of Vav where he where undergoes the alchemical process of sublimation. He climbs a mountain and encounters the Hebrew prophet Enoch.
Path Symbol: A nail .

You formulate the astral temple of Malkuth and intone the relevant divine names. Sandalphon come forth from the east and you exchange the Projection Sign and the Sign of Silence with her. When she inquires about your reason for coming to the temple of Malkuth, you hold up the nail. The archangel escorts you up the Path of Tau to Yesod. You continue up the Path of Samekh to Tiphareth, and from there you follow the Path of Yod to Chesed.

The square temple of Chesed, draped in blue velvet, greets your eyes. The ceiling and floor are each ornamented with a square outlined in orange. Four large candlesticks mark the corners of the room, and the temple flame burns in the center of the sanctuary atop a blue altar.

You call forth the inhabitants of this Sephirah, vibrating the divine names *El, Tzadqiel,* and *Chashmalim.*

From the thick mist in the east of the sanctuary, the archangel Tzadqiel appears: a large, jovial man grasping a shepherd's crook and dressed in robes of blue, ornamented with an orange diamond.

Great blue and orange wings sprout from his shoulders, and a white diamond of light surrounds his head. He addresses you:

"You have entered the realm of Mercy. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the symbol of the nail."

Tzadqiel gives a nod of satisfaction. He takes you east of the temple and draws back a portion of the blue velvet drapery to reveal a red-orange archway bearing a white letter Vav on its keystone. Within the arch is a veil with the tarot image of *The Hierophant* painted on it. The archangel traces the symbol of Taurus ZS in the air before the archway, and the veil evaporates. In its place is a door carved out of topaz. Holding up the nail, you trace the letter Vav 1 before the door, which dissolves. Stepping through the por-tal, you enter the Sixteenth Path.

At first you see nothing but red-orange mists. Then a white shape comes flying toward you—a ring tumbling through the swirling darkness. As it gets closer, it slows down and grows larger in size. At last it comes to a full stop and you see it clearly—a perfectly round ring of white metal, as large as a galaxy. The center of the ring contains a mass of red flames. The energy of the fire contained within the ring is equal to that of an atomic fusion reactor. The image of the ring grows larger as you are drawn into its center.

Like the eye of a hurricane, the center of the ring is calm and stable, while the flames spin around you. The boiling flames are held away from you by some kind of transparent firewall. You are in the center of a glass, egg-shaped vessel. You are aware that the heat is intense, but you feel only a slight warmth. You seem to be experiencing a curious sense of detachment. Then you feel your body slowing turning into a liquid, becoming fluid. All parts of yourself flow down into the bottom of the glass container. You have become like mud-colored water, with a thin sheen of oil on the surface that shimmers like the colors of petroleum. Then you realize that you are looking down on the dark fluid that was your body—your consciousness has become a vapor which rises up to the top of the vessel. Like a wisp of steam, your consciousness flows out through an opening in the top of the glass.

You find yourself on a road that runs through a piedmont at the base of a mountain range. The path leads into the foothills and up into the highest elevations of the range. Undaunted by what will certainly be a long walk, you start up the path.

The trail is very steep, and it grows more precipitous with every step. Eventually the terrain becomes so steep that you must use both hands and feet to climb up the sheer face of the rock wall. The vegetation of the plains becomes even more scarce as you climb—tall grasses give way to hardy weeds, twisted mountain scrub, and stunted trees with roots that cling to the rocks like gnarled fingers.

You reach the summit and pulí yourself up to a flat, narrow vista which overlooks a large expanse of land far below. It is sunny, but there is a thin haze of clouds at this elevation. At the very edge of the vista is a steep rock overhang that inclines skyward. The rock is poised over a precipice like the prow of a ship over the abyss of the waters. This is truly a place where the heavens meet the earth.

On the rock you see a figure of a man robed in white. His hair and beard are long and gray, and he stands facing away from you with his arms stretched out to the sky. From some source high up in the heavens, a bright ray of light, more brilliant than the sun, surrounds the figure like a spotlight. He bathes in its glory for a few moments—he seems to be communicating with the invisible source of the light. Eventually, he turras to face you, but the ineffable light continues to illuminate his forro. He addresses you:

"I am Enoch, whose narre means 'initiator' and 'teacher.' I am he who speaks with God face-to-face. I am the father of Methuselah, the ancient one. I, myself, have lived 365 years. I am he who speaks the Truth.

"Years ago two heavenly messengers came to me, that I might behold the uppermost dwellings in the immutable realm of the divine. I was carried up by two mighty angels whose eyes were like a burning light and whose wings were brighter than gold. I was taken to see the wonders of the ten heavens: the celestial sea, the treasure house of the dew, the course of moon, and the elements of the sun. The marvelous creatures of the higher realms-the phoenixes and Chalkydri, the Grigori, giant creatures in all the colors of the rainbow. I saw the Kerubim and Seraphim, six-winged

and many-eyed, and all manner of angels and archangels 'who measure all life in heaven and in earth, and who are appointed over the seasons and years. The sweet voices of the angels in song are impossible to describe. I saw the palace of righteousness and the place of corruption. All these things were shown to me in my ascent to the seventh heaven.

"And I was taken up to the eighth heaven, which is called *Mazaloth,* containing the twelve signs of the zodiac, and the ninth heaven, which is called *Kuchavim,* where the heavenly homes of the twelve signs are. And in the tenth heaven, called *Aravoth,* 1 saw the face of divine one, Most High, who revealed unto me great, untold secrets. He divulged to me the high mysteries of creation: the birth of light and darkness, and the conception of all things heavenly and all things earthly.



Figure 47: At the Summit of the Mountain

"Who am I to tell of Adonai's indescribable being and of his wonderful face? 1 cannot tell the quantity of his many instructions and various voices, the throne of God, very great and not made with hands. Nor can I tell the multitude of those standing around him, troops of Kerubim and Seraphim, nor his immutable beauty, and who shall tell of the ineffable greatness of his glory?

"I fell prone before God, but his angels picked me up and anointed me. He selected an archangel to bring me a reed pen and parchment. At the bidding of the Most High, 1 wrote down all that I saw in 366 books, from beginning to end. I know all things and the secret workings of all things. I have investigated everything in the universe and have written all this knowledge into books.

"And I came down from heaven for thirty days to advise my children and give an account of my life to my descendants. 1 gave my children all the books 1 had written, that they might read and learn; and when they had learned all they could, to pass my books on to all others who wanted them, that all might be instructed in the great and marvelous works of the divine, and that they should hand them on to their sons from generation to generation. And after 1 had instructed my descendants and the elders of my people, two angels returned for me, and 1 ascended to heaven. There 1 remain till the times are ended.

"Here I, and others like me who have taken on angelic form, continue to initiate and instruct those who seek the higher mysteries. We prepare the paradise that awaits all true seekers for we are the connecting link between That which is Above to That which is Below. And yet in order to hear what is taught, you must listen with the ears of the heart. Be still and listen. The teacher is within you, he is a part of you. Know that the voice within was, is, and always will be your initiator."[17]

Enoch ends his speech. He holds the palms of his hands out toward you, and you notice a halo of light outlining his fingertips. You close your eyes and begin to listen—really listen—meditating on the inner spark within you, which is the only spiritual teacher you will truly ever have. Listening to your own inner mentor, you hear a voice deep within your own soul speaking to you:

"I will speak to those who know how to hear not with the ears of the body but with the ears of the mirad. For many have sought after the truth and have not been able to find it, because they continue to split the self. No one who is thus divided will be able to look up to the truth, for no one can serve two masters. How long, O Israel, shall ye hall between two opinions? To none but those who listen with the ears of the mirad I will speak my mystery. For I am the Truth of the Self which is unity, perfection, and awareness."[18]

You open your eyes to find the prophet Enoch gone. You are alone on the mountain. Your journey on the Path of Vav is at an end. Returning the way you carne, you reach the temple of Tiphareth and from there you descend the Path of Samekh to Yesod. You continue down the Path of Tau to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon closes the portal of Tau behind you, and you salute her with the Projection Sign. The archangel answers with the Sign of Silence.



The Fourteenth Path of Daleth

> *The Fourteenth Path is the Illuminating Intelligence and is so called because it is that Chashmal (scintillating flame or brilliance) which is the founder of the concealed and fundamental ideas of holiness and of their stages of preparation.*

The Fourteenth Path is a particular brilliance that is the founder (or foundation) of certain hidden, arcane spiritual energies. The terco "foundation" draws an analogy to the sphere of Yesod, which is the foundation of life—the exact mechanics of which remain a mystery to us. They are "concealed." Life in this path is symbolized by the Chashmal, the scintillating flame. This divine life-force is prepared in "stages" by the Fourteenth Path, which unites the Father (Chokmah) and the Mother (Binah), and results in the processes of conception and birth—the birth of the primal life-force.

The Hebrew letter Daleth mean "door." It is the portal or womb through which 'the life-force is born. The Path of Daleth

organizes the energy from Chokmah and passes it along to Binah, the form-builder. It is our birth canal into this universe, the luminous and fruitful divine mother. Thus, it is a path of fertility—producing diverse mental images from the divine. These images are the thought-germs that give life to all manifestation in the cosmos. The Path of Daleth is also a route of imagination, adaptation, and consciousness, as opposed to subconsciousness.

As one of the three reciprocal paths that straddles both sides of the Tree, this is a path which unites opposites. But at the Supernal level on the Tree, one could say that it is a path that unites "unities." It is the archetypal creative force symbolized by the logical male energy (Chokmah) and the intuitive female energy (Binah), which are united. When conscious reasoning and subconscious intuition are joined together, rather than at odds with each other, the result is fruitfulness and expansion. This can lead to new levels of awareness and increased powers of image visualization and imaginationtools that can augment the student's spiritual growth. But in order to gain these benefits, we must learn to balance analytical thinking with intuitive insight, and try creative new approaches to our daily spiritual practice.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF DALETH

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Yesod, Tiphareth, and Binah and continues on the Path of Daleth where he sees the constellation of Cassiopeia, woman enthroned. He enters an ancient temple and encounters the goddess Hathor.
Path Symbol: The fleur-de-lis

You envision the astral temple of Malkuth and vibrate the associated divine names. Sandalphon arises from the east and you exchange the signs with her. She inquires about your reason for coming to the temple of Malkuth, and you hold up the fleur-de-lis. The archangel escorts you up the Path of Tau to Yesod. You continue up the Path of Samekh to Tiphareth, and from there you follow the Path of Zayin to Binah.

The enigmatic temple of Binah unfolds to your view. The walls remain hidden from you—veiled by a mysterious curtain of darkness. Only the central onyx altar with its three white candles, temple flame, and white triangle are revealed to you.

You vibrate the divine names which awaken the inhabitants of Binah: *YHVH Elohim, Tzaphqiel,* and *Erelim.*

The dark form of the archangel Tzaphqiel manifests just east of the altar, covered from head to foot in a black robe and veil. You can barely make out the figure of a woman dressed in black robes, her face completely covered in the folds of cloth. Behind her are the huge dark wings of a rayen. Tzaphqiel speaks to you in a soft, low voice:

"You have entered the realm of Understanding. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the symbol of the fleur-de-lis."

Tzaphqiel gives a slight nod. She takes you east of the temple. It is so dark that you can't see anything at first. Then you can barely just make out a green archway bearing a white letter Daleth on its keystone. Within the arch is a veil with the tarot image of *The Empress* painted on it. The archangel traces the symbol of Venus in the air before the archway, and the veil evaporates. In its place is a door carved out of emerald. Holding up the symbol of the fleurde-lis, you trace the letter Daleth before the door, which dissolves. Stepping through the portal, you hear the voice of Tzaphqiel speaking to you as you enter the Path of Daleth:

"1 am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."[20]

You are standing on a hilltop. It is nighttime and aboye you are the celestial heavens—the stars, the planets, and the constellations all look bigger and brighter than you can ever remember them appearing. To the Egyptians, this indigo vault of the stars was the body of Nut, goddess of the firmament of heaven. Gazing up, you imagine the blue-violet body of Nut, limbs outstretched and arched over the earth. The planet Venus shines as brightly as a precious jewel against black velvet. One group of stars in particular catches your eye. It is the constellation of Cassiopeia, the lady in the chair, the queen enthroned. Superimposed over the constellation's inverted "W"-shaped line of stars, you see the image of a woman seated on

a throne. In her left hand she holds a palm frond. As you gaze at the figure of the queen, you hear the voice of Tzaphqiel commenting on the image:

"Not many are the stars, nor thickly set that, ranged in line, mark her whole figure out, but like a key that forces back the bolts which kept the double door secured within, so shaped her stars you singly trace along."[21]

Near the constellation of Cassiopeia, you see the star group known as Cepheus, the king, who in Greek mythology was the husband of Cassiopeia and the father of Andromeda. Like his spouse, he is also seated on a celestial throne, holding a scepter.

Gazing into the heavens, you are reminded of all the ancient myths you Nave ever heard of the star goddess and the sky god—two of the oldest archetypes known to the human race. The star goddess, or heavenly mother, has surfaced at different times under the names of Inanna, Isis, Hathor, and Mary, the queen of heaven. The sky god, or heavenly father, has assumed various names including Anu, Re-Atum, Zeus, and Yahweh. Many legends concur that the universe was born from the union of the star goddess and the sky god—those great primordial forces which are older than time itself.

In your mind's eye you receive an image of a man and woman in a lovers' embrace. Aboye the heads of the couple is the stylized image of a star, while between them is the symbol of a circle or an egg. Contained within this central egg are seven smaller circles.

There is a sudden flash of light, followed by thick dark clouds. You find yourself on a path that runs along the Nile River, the Eden of Egypt, lined with a broad, green sea of river grasses and rich cultivated fields that extend out to the very edges of the desert.

The road leads up a palisade of cliffs to the right. You follow the trail up the embankment. Before you is a massive temple built from white sandstone adorned with gold and silver. Two giant pylons form the great gateway into the structure. Entering the building, you pass through a roofless, colonnaded courtyard into a lofty covered hall with a ceiling supported by mighty sandstone columns. In the far end of the room is a small service entrance. You enter and find yourself in a narrow passageway that leads to a hidden chamber, the throne room of the goddess Hathor.



Figure 48: Hathor

The goddess sits in an attitude of stately beauty, surrounded by offerings of food, wine, and perfumed oils. Her skin is a lovely golden color, and she is dressed in robes of a vibrant grass-green. She wears the golden vulture headdress surmounted by the lunar horns and the solar disk. Her eyes are large and brown and soft, like the eyes of a gentle cow. The goddess speaks to you:

"I appear before you in the form of Hathor, the goddess that gave birth to the universe. A goddess of many things which are seemingly contradictory: east and west, moon and sun, heaven and the underworld, life and death. In this form I am known as the goddess of the planet Venus and the star Sirius, the lady of joy and love. How can I be all of these things? My true name is Unity—I am perfect and complete. I am the door of initiation and the foundation of the mysteries of the origins of life. I am that brilliant flame which prepares the divine life-force for conception and birth finto manifestation.

"Mine is the path of fertility. I channel force frito form. I take on substance. I am the volatile that becomes fixed, the shadow that becomes a body, the spirit that becomes a soul, and the dream that becomes a thought. I give manifestation to the unmanifest, that it might gaze upon itself in joy, understanding, and love."

Hathor pauses, then continues: "It is written: 'If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophesy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if 1 have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, 1 am nothing. And if 1 bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if 1 give my body to be burned, but have not love, it provided me nothing.

"Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

"Love never faileth, but where there be prophesies, they shall be done away, whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect has come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I

spoke as a child, I felt as a child, and 1 thought as a child. But when 1 became an adult, I put away childish things. For now we see in mirror, darkly; but *then* face to face. Nqw I know in part, but then shall 1 know fully even as I also was fully known. Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three. But the greatest of these is love.'[22]

"My power is the power of love. The love of which I speak is eternal—it is unity of the spirit, the divine madness of the priests and priestesses, the god-intoxication of the mystics, the *hieros gammos* of the soul. All acts of true love are my rituals—they are a reflection of the divine love that exists beyond all concepts of time, space, and gender. A love that rejoices in the unification of the self—a 'oneness' that eliminates all division. The perfect love is the restoration of the Garden of Eden."

The goddess passes her hand in front of your face, initiating a vision. In your mind's eye you see six stars in circle. In the middle of the circle is a seventh star. This star grows larger as you pass through it into an indigo galaxy of lesser stars. You see an image of the Tree of Life as you have come to know it. Above the Abyss at the point of Daath, you see a flaming sword in the shape of a lightning bolt. Then you see the sword withdrawn back into Kether. The fallen Sephirah of Malkuth is elevated back to its original position on the Tree of Life before the Fall. You see before you the image of the Tree restored. Then the vision passes and you are in the company of the goddess Hathor once more.

Your journey on the Path of Daleth has reached its completion. After thanking the goddess, you return to the temple of Binah, and from there you descend the Path of Zayin to Tiphareth and the Path of Samekh to Yesod. You continue down the Path of Tau to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon seals the portal behind you. You salute the archangel of Malkuth with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.



Chokmah

Chokmah is the second Sephirah and the sphere of divine wisdom. This is a type of wisdom that is beyond any knowledge that we humans can comprehend. The pure energy from Kether has overflowed and created another sphere, as well as a natural polaritytwo—the reflection of the number one. Chokmah is a sphere of pure life-giving energy. It is the great motivating force of the universe which starts everything into motion. The zodiac, the stars, and the constellations are attributed to Chokmah.

According to the *Sepher Yetzirah:*

> *The Second Path is that of Illuminating Intelligence; it is the Crown of Creation, the Splendor of the Unity, equaling it, and it is exalted aboye every head, and named by the Kabbalists the Second Glory.*

Chokmah is clearly confirmed here as the essence of illumination; not the same as that brilliant spark of Kether which exists on a higher plane, but as wisdom—perfect knowledge that has developed as a result of the reflection of Kether into a second sphere, a mirror of the first, enabling the divine spirit to both emanate from itself and behold itself. The "Crown of Creation" indicates that Chokmah was "created" from the crown (Kether). Again we are presented with the idea that the primal spirit is not diminished in any way through the succession of the Sephiroth; "the Splendor of Unity, equaling it." That "it is exalted aboye every head" alludes to Chokmah's high position on the Tree along with the other Supernals aboye the Abyss.

As the first Sephirah to develop polarity, Chokmah is placed at the summit of the right-hand pillar. If Kether can be described as a point, then Chokmah could be portrayed as a straight line; an extension of the point into space. The energy of Chokmah is dynamic and outpouring; for it is the great stimulator of the universe. Within Chokmah lies the first masculine (fire) expression as opposed to the androgynous expression of Kether. Whereas Kether is the calm center point of the universe, Chokmah is complete action and movement—the vital energizing element of existente. It is the archetypal positive and the great Supernal father,

Abba. However, Chokmah is not simply a masculine sexual energy, but the root essence of masculine or dynamic force.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO CHOKMAH

Summary: The student journeys from Malkuth to Yesod and Tiphareth. From there he travels the Fifteenth Path of Heh to the temple of Chokmah. He encounters the archangel Raziel and the angelic choir known as the Ophanim. He finds himself on a high mountain peak where he has a vision of the Hebrew god Yahweh. *Chokmah Symbol:* The thyrsus

On entering the temple of Malkuth, you give the appropriate signs. Sandalphon takes you up the Path of Tau to Yesod. From there you ascend the Path of Samekh to Tiphareth. Then you rise up the Path of Heh.

You find yourself standing at the end of the Fifteenth Path, facing the door to the astral temple of Chokmah. A large gray door is before you. Carved into this door is the Hebrew letter Cheth painted in white. Giving the Projection Sign, you step through the door into the second Sephirah. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

The temple of Chokmah is a round chamber. Its circular wall is constructed from gray stones of every size and shape. An outline of the zodiacal wheel is engraved on the ceiling as well as the floor. The wheel is divided into twelve houses, with the symbols of the appropriate zodiacal sign within each house. The air is scented with musk, and the only thing in the room is a central altar, made of star ruby, on which are two white candles and a bowl carved from turquoise containing the central flame of the temple. Paradoxically, the chamber seems very calm and full of activity at the same time.

You vibrate the sacred names which awaken the inhabitants of Chokmah: the divine name *Yah* and the name of the archangel *Raziel.* Then you call on the order of angels known as the *Ophanim.*

A dark form slowly materializes just east of the altar. You can barely make out the figure of a man dressed in neutral gray robes, so perfectly does his form blend into the gray walls of the sanctuary. His face is completely covered by a gray hood. Sprouting from his shoulders are two great, dove-gray wings—the feathers shimmering with a slight iridescence, like gasoline on water. Raziel, the "Herald" or "Secret of God," speaks to you in a deep, sonorous voice:

"You have entered the realm of the Illuminating Intelligence. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer: "By the symbol of the thyrsus."

Raziel gives a slight nod. He directs your attention to the temple flame on the altar. The fire fiares up suddenly and the room around you becomes transparent. Then the sanctuary fades from view. It is replaced by nebulous gray swirling clouds. You hear the voice of the archangel speaking to you:

"It is written: 'For the Father perfected all things, and delivered them over to the Second Mind, which the whole race of men call the First.'"[24]

You find yourself standing on a hill next to a tree. You are inside a large green globe representing the earth. Aboye your head is a spherical ceiling painted with images of the sun, the moon, and the stars against an indigo background. It seems quite strange to you that the heavens should appear so flat and your body so large that you can see the curvature of the earth. Reaching upwards, you touch the surface of the painted heavens—it feels like paper. You tear a hole in the painting and push your head and the upper part of your body through the opening. What you see on the other side takes your breath away.

Before you are rotating bands of clouds, fire, and light in every spectrum of the rainbow. In wave after wave, the energy patterns roll steadily downward from aboye in a graceful ballet of movement. The movement also proceeds in ways that you cannot easily define—forward and backward, inward and outward. It is as though on one level you were looking at the lungs of the universe, breathing in the pure divine energy and breathing out the life-force of the cosmos.

You also see the band of the zodiac, constellation after constellation, moving in one direction slowly around the earth.

Then, gliding effortlessly through the bands of the clouds, you see several circular shapes rising and falling in the mists in a rhythmic dance. They appear to be the same golden wheels that you first encountered on the Eighteenth Path of Cheth. The four wheels all turn in one direction, yet inside the rim of each wheel is a smaller wheel that turns in a direction perpendicular to the outer wheel. The rims are covered with eyes, and each wheel is surrounded by a white halo of many wings.

One of their number moves toward you across the clouds. It speaks to you in a familiar voice that you recognize as belonging to the archangel of Chokmah. In his persona as *Raziel Chokmael,* ruler of the angelic host of the second Sephirah, Raziel speaks: "I am the 'Sent Forth One of God.' The keeper of the secrets divine, the sapphire Book of Wisdom. In legend I am the archangel who first

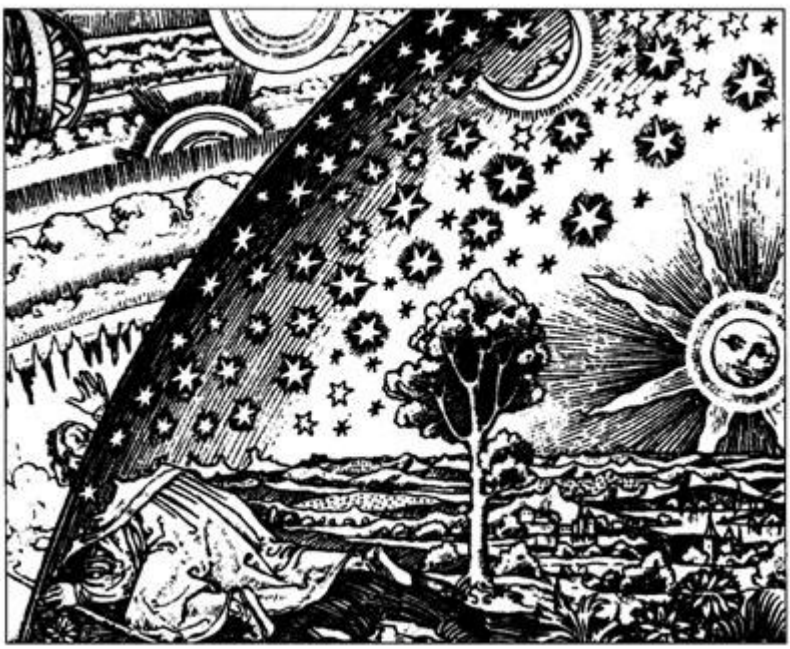


Figure 49: The Search for Truth

taught the secrets of the Qabalah and the wisdom of the stars to Adam in the Garden of Paradise. I am the awareness of the singular power of the universe."

Raziel continues: "We are the Ophanim, the Wheels and the Many-Eyed Ones. We are the order of angels associated with the sphere of Chokmah, the sphere of force and power. We are the spirals of evolution, providing essential energy and motivation, and initiating all activities—beginnings, endings, and transformations. The astrological influences of the constellations, born from the everexpanding genesis of the universe, is directed in its motion by us. Our work is described in terms of resonance, cycles, rhythms, and frequencies. We are the principies of energy and change, refracting the primal energy from Kether into viable cycles and patterns of power and the continuance thereof. We also break down complex patterns of energy into their primal forms before returning to Kether. And we operate the cycles of karma. We are the upholders of wisdom, and we aid the archetypal masculine in the manifestation of his presence, through willpower and primary activation of force."

The vision of the Ophanim fades out to gray. You find yourself standing on the snow-covered peak of a mountain. The summit is so high that it is completely engulfed in gray clouds. To your right, you see the peak of a second mountain, and far below you is a dark ocean. This must be the roof of the world, you think to yourself.

There is a low rumbling sound, and the mists suddenly split open. You see a vision of the high god of the Hebrews. The form of the mighty god Yahweh is outlined against the sky in a rainbow of fire. He has the stately figure of a wise old king, with long, milky-white hair and beard. He is dressed in a plain gray robe and in his right hand he holds a rough wooden staff. When he speaks, the sound of his voice is like a thousand thunders:

"I am the thought that dwells in the Light. 1 am the movement that dwells in the All. I am the invisible one within the All. 1 exist within the silence. Within my thought, it is I who am laden with the Voice. It is through me that knowledge comes forth uttering a voice by means of thought. I am the thought of the Father, and through me proceedeth the knowledge of everlasting things. I am a mystery, invisible to all those who are visible in the All. Light dwelling in Light."[25]

"It is written: 'I am Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, for I am born again and again. I am that whose force is unmanifest and nourisheth the Dwellers in the West. 1 am the Guider in the East. The Lord of two faces who seeth by his own light. 1 am the hidden wisdom of the soul, creator of the gods. I am he who bursteth the bonds. Uttermost Extension is my Name. 1 bring to its fullness the Force which is hidden within me. I am he who cometh forth as One who breaketh open the Bates, and everlasting is the daylight which my Will hath created. I shine forth as the Lord of Life and the glorious law of Light. 1 travel on high, I tread upon the Firmament, 1 raise a flashing flame with the lightning of mine eye."'[26]

A boli of gray lightning issues from the eyes of Yahweh; it strikes the second mountain peak off to your right, blasting a hole in the elevation. The energy from the blast reaches deep down into the core of the earth where a process of thermal heating commences. The mountain explodes in a shower of rock, ash, and gas. Lava gushes out of the hole into the many crevasses below the summit. The lava flows down into the vast dark ocean below, sending up angry clouds of steam as the molten rock is swallowed by the salty sea. Eventually so much lava reaches the water that it forms an extended land mass—a new peninsula of igneous rock projecting out from the shoreline. Years after it cools, the new land formed here will be cultivated by the various creatures of the earth who will make it their home. You marvel at the process of planetary evolution that changes the very surface of the earth—the cosmic force whose power activates new growth.

You look up as the vision of Yahweh fades, and the clouds assume their normal appearance. Your journey into Chokmah has arrived at its completion. Following the Path of Heh, you return to the temple of Tiphareth, and from there you descend the Path of Samekh to Yesod. You continue down the Path of Tau to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon closes the portal behind you. You salute the archangel of Malkuth with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.

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The Twelfth Path of Beth

> *The Twelfth Path* ***is*** *the Intelligence of Transparency, because it is that species of Magnificence called Chazchazit (or seership), the place whence issues the vision of those seeing in apparitions.*

This path has a great deal to say about the idea of psychic vision. The "Transparency" of the path implies a certain clarity that is needed for true revelation. It is the place of true prophecy or seership. This is not simply the lower psychic reflexes, but rather the pure and clear root of all higher spiritual visions. It is the revelation of the Divine Self as it emerges. From this vantage point, one is able to observe the arcane workings of all dimensions through various methods of psychic awareness and inner sight.

The Hebrew letter Beth means "house." This indicates that the Twelfth Path is one of containment, sanctuary, or a place of "being within." It is the dwelling place of the divine. Since it connects the pure consciousness in Kether to the maternal subconsciousness in Binah, this path represents the supreme self-consciousness that is the supreme "seer," which knows and sees all.

The Twelfth Path alludes to potential manifesting into action. Since Binah is the sphere that limits form by dividing and organizing it, the Path of Beth partakes of this function as well, organizing the creative (potential) energy from Kether into manifestation in Binah. It represents the primal will of the divine that is reflected in the purified will of the mortal human seeking to unte with it. This divine will seeks to manifest itself into diverse ideas of form as it descends the Tree.

The student exploring this path should remember that the "seership" alluded to on this path is spiritual knowledge in its highest form. Although there is nothing wrong with exploring visionary gifts (clairvoyance, etc.), it is important not to become an "astral junky"—one who wanders aimlessly and carelessly on the astral planes. The key is to develop focused concentration, which allows the divine energy to be clearly seen.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF BETH

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Yesod, Tiphareth, and Binah. He continues on the Path of Beth where he has a vision of Adam Kadmon. He also encounters a shape-shifting magician and envisions the colossal form of Thoth.
Path Symbol: The infinity sign co.

The ten-sided chamber of Malkuth materializes around you. After you intone the divine names, Sandalphon appears and you exchange the usual signs. She inquires about your purpose in coming to her temple, and you hold up the infinity sign. The archangel leads you quickly through the portal of Tau in the east of the temple, and up the Thirty-second Path to the astral temple of Yesod. You rapidly ascend the Path of Samekh to Tiphareth, and continue up the Path of Zayin to the anomalous temple of Binah.

The dark temple of the third Sephirah unfolds to your view. As before the walls remain ambiguous—concealed by an impenetrable veil of darkness. The only thing that is visible is the central onyx altar, on which are three white candles, a central temple flame in a bowl, and a white triangle.

You vibrate the divine names which awaken the inhabitants of Binah: *YHVH Elohim, Tzaphqiel,* and *Erelim.*

East of the altar, the dark, raven-winged form of the archangel Tzaphqiel emerges from the dark mists, her form completely obscured by a black robe and a veil which covers her face. Tzaphqiel speaks to you in a soft, alto voice:

"You have entered the realm of primordial form. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer, holding up the emblem: "By the symbol of infinity."

Tzaphqiel takes you east of the temple. You can barely just make out a yellow archway with a white letter Beth engraved on its keystone. Within the arch is a veil with the tarot image of *The Magician* painted on it. The archangel traces the symbol of Mercury 1^5 in the air before the archway, and the veil evaporates. In its place is a door carved out of tawny agate. Holding up the infinity sign, you trace the letter Beth before the door, which dissolves. Stepping through

the portal, you hear the voice of Tzaphqiel speaking to you as you enter the Twelfth Path:

"In the Beginning the Elohim created the heaven and earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Ruach Elohim moved upon the face of the waters."[27]

You are standing in small wooden ship, an Egyptian barque, similar in design to the Matet boat of Re, the sun god. There is a small shrine in the center of the ship's deck, however, there is no god within—the shrine is empty. You are alone on the ship except for one person sitting in the rear of the vessel, who seems to navigate the ship by a method you cannot see or comprehend. The figure sits slumped at the stern, concealed behind a mass of ragged cloaks and veils. The figure is completely unresponsive to you, as he silently pilots the ship toward a distant light on the eastern horizon.

It is nighttime. The blue-violet sky is speckled with white stars, and you gaze up at the vastness of space—the planets, constellations, and galaxies. The belt of the Milky Way is particularly brilliant. Looking up at the heaven you notice ten stars becoming larger and more noticeable than all the others. The ten stars slowly move toward each other until they form the outline of the ten spheres of the Tree of Life. Smaller stars gather around the larger ones until they form the outline of a human body. Two stars appear where the eyes would be, and a third is situated at the mouth. It is then that you realize that you are looking at a living being—Adam Kadmon—the "heavenly man." He is the body of God, the divine prototype of humanity, with the crown of Kether aboye his head and Malkuth at his feet.

Adam Kadmon is the primordial being said to exist at the dawn of time itself, conceived before the archetypal world of Atziluth carne finto being. He is the intervening link between the Ain Soph and the order of the four Qabalistic worlds, which became manifest as existence evolved from the divine to the material. Adam Kadmon is the very consciousness of the divine. He contains within himself everything that is needed to create the manifest universe as a reflection of the divine universe. His body is the raw material from which the cosmos is constructed, and he is a

mirror of reflection that is used by the divine to descend the four worlds of the Qabalah and experience all aspects of creation. He is also a reflection of your own human consciousness projected upwards into the archetypal realm of unity. Gazing up into the starry face of Adam Kadmon, you recognize a form of yourself as it exists in the Supernal unity. Slowly, the stars that make up the image of the archetypal human disperse, and the heavens resume their usual appearance.

You hear someone stirring in the back of the boat. The mysterious navigator of the ship rises to his feet. Pulling off his ragged outer cloak, you are quite surprised to see Merlin, the magician you first encountered on an earliér path, dressed in a linen shirt, leather trousers, brown cloak, and boots, his head covered by a green Celtic skullcap. He grasps his rowan staff and regards you with eyes that appear deceivingly young. A brown, hooded cloak covers his head and shoulders. You draw nearer as the hooded figure turns to face the east. He pulís back the hood of his cape to reveal a green skullcap embroidered with a Celtic design. "It's good to see you again, fellow traveler," he tells you.

Before your eyes, his form changes to that of a Hebrew ruler, dressed in a royal robe and headdress. He is now the wise monarch and master magician of Israel, the great King Solomon. He speaks to you: "Except Adonai build the house, their labor is but lost that build it."[28]

The figure changes form again, now appearing as a golden-skinned Egyptian priest with a shaven head, dressed in a white tunic covered with the skin of a leopard. Hermes Trismegistus, the greatest magician of the Hellenistic era, stands before you bearing a papyrus scroll. He speaks: "Was he one or many, merging name and fame in one—like a stream, to which, converging, many streamlets run?"

The figure morphs again into the form of Merlin, magician to King Arthur of Britain. He continues the speech where Hermes left off:

"Who shall call his dreams fallacious? Who has searched and sought all the unexplored and spacious universe of thought?"

Solomon the Wise takes the place of Merlin and resumes the rhyme: "Who in his own skill confiding; shall with rule and line, mark the borderland dividing, human and divine?"

You answer the riddle of the three magicians: "Trismegistus! Three times greatest! How thy name sublime has descended to this latest progeny of time! "[29]

Hermes Trismegistus opens his papyrus scroll and begins to read out the following invocation: "Be opened ye heavens, ye winds stand still, and let the immortal circle of God receive these words. O all ye powers that are in me, praise the one and the all. O Holy Knowledge, being enlightened by thee, I magnify the intelligible light, and rejoice in the joy of the mind. For all things are done as the mind willeth.[30]

"Thee 1 invoke the Bornless One. Thee that didst create the earth and the heavens. Thee that didst create the night and the day. Thee that didst create the darkness and the light. Thou art Osorronophris, whom no man hath seen at any time. Thou art Iabas. Thou art Iapos. Thou hast distinguished between the just and the unjust. Thou didst make the female and the male. Thou didst pro-duce the seed and the fruit. Hear me!"[31]

There is a rumbling in the night sky. Before your eyes, the celestial band of stars making up the Milky Way coalesce into a wide, flat strip of light that extends out far out into the universe. Flanking this enormous stellar pathway on either side is a procession of gods and goddesses so vast in size that they easily dwarf the earth.

As if this sight wasn't spectacular enough, a colossal figure appears at the far end of the path, a giant among the gods. The figure walks down the path toward the earth. It is Thoth, the great god of magic, looking as you remember him from the sphere of Hod. Now, however, his radiant frame fills the night sky—a massive ibis-headed god crowned with the lunar crescent and solar disk. In his right hand Thoth holds a Lotus wand. He directs the top of the wand to a point out in space.

He speaks without moving and utters a sound that can hardly be described as a word at all, but rather like the sound of a thousand angels singing all the praises of God in all languages of the world yet united in one voice. As he emits this sound, you hear the voice

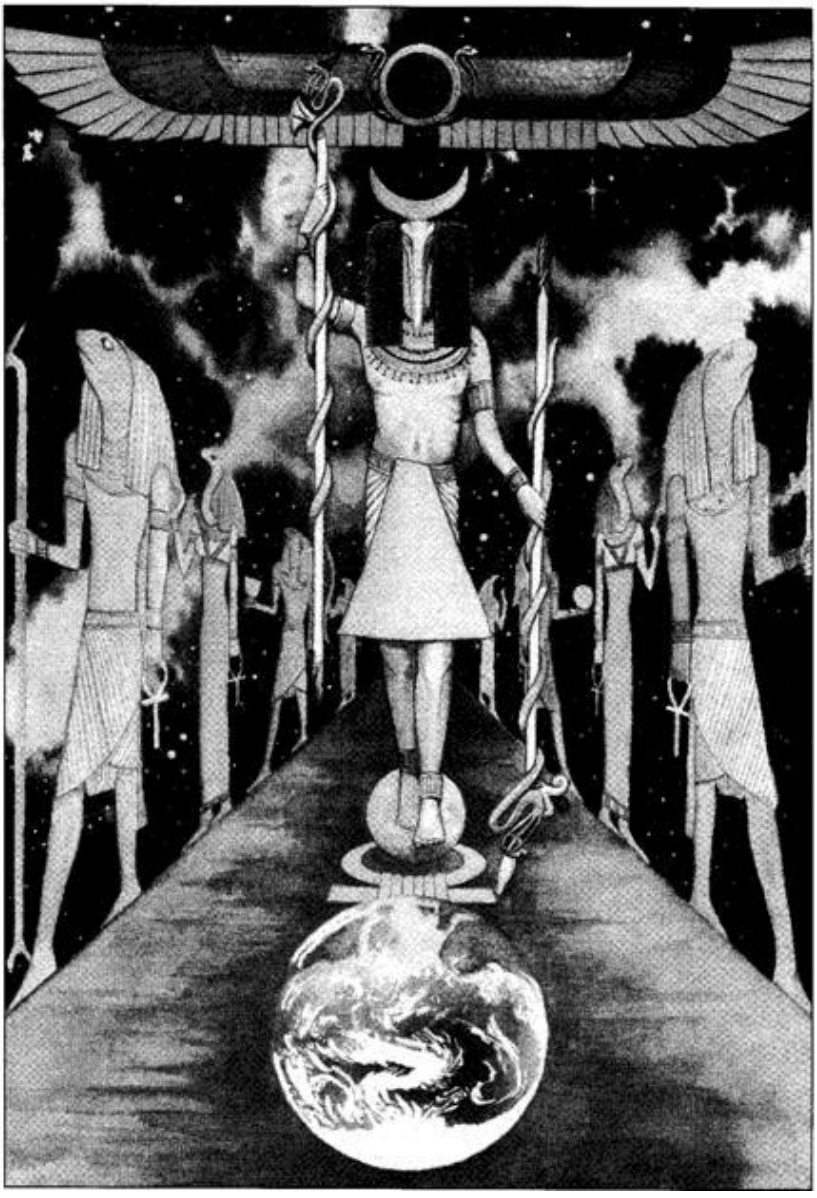


Figure 50: Thoth

of Hermes Trismegistus speaking to you in your mind: "In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."[32]

A ray of light emanates from the tip of the Lotus Wand to strike a region of space where a dense interstellar cloud of hydrogen and dust is located. The cloud begins to collapse under the influence of its own gravity, becoming denser and hotter. A build-up of gases in the center of the cloud begins to exert an outward pressure that halts the collapse of the cloud. Then, in the very center of the cloud, a new cluster of stars begins to form. You Nave just witnessed the birth of a newborn galaxy, and you pause for a moment to reflect on this cosmic event. The colossal figure of Thoth and the other gods fade from your view, but the new star system remains.

You turn toward your shape-shifting companion, but notice that he is gone. Merlin, Solomon, and Hermes are nowhere to be found. You are alone in the peaceful barque under the broad nocturnal sky. In the place where you previously saw the vision of Adam Kadmon and Thoth is the natural wonder of the aurora borealis, luminous bands of shimmering light against the indigo backdrop of night.

Your journey into the Path of Beth has concluded. You return to Binah, where you are greeted by the archangel Tzaphqiel. Following the Path of Zayin, you return to the temple of Tiphareth, and from there you descend the Path of Samekh to Yesod. You continue down the Path of Tau to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon closes the portal behind you. You salute the archangel of Malkuth with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.

The Eleventh Path of Aleph

> *The Eleventh Path is the Scintillating Intelligence, because it is the essence of that curtain which is placed close to the order of the disposition, and this is a special dignity given to it that it may be able to stand before the Face of the Cause of Causes.*

The aboye statement indicates that this path best reflects the first outflow of pure divine energy from Kether, the "Cause of Causes."

Thus the path scintillates or shimmers with light. The first path is described as a curtain, a veil before the Holy of Holies which, by design, conceals the highest Sephirah from those who have not fully ascended to it. The Eleventh Path connects Kether with Chokmah, therefore it partakes of the same ineffable energy of Kether and the Ain Soph beyond. All energies that are aboye Chokmah are completely beyond human understanding.

The Hebrew letter Aleph means "ox." This refers to the primal creative force symbolized in ancient times by the oxen that were used for transportation and agriculture. In the mythologies of several cultures, the bull was an emblem of the Creator, the primary deity who provided food for humanity. The letter Aleph also resembles the ancient emblem of the gammadian or fylfot cross, a symbol which appears in virtually all ancient world mythologies as a token of the whirling or rotating energies to be found at the birth of the universe.

The Eleventh Path represents pure potential not yet set into action. It is potential in search of first experience. The student on the Path of Aleph must learn to have complete and total trust in the divine, which cannot be comprehended.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO THE PATH OF ALEPH

Summary: In this pathworking, the student travels from Malkuth to Yesod, Tiphareth, and Binah. He continues on the Path of Aleph where he encounters a village of primitive humans and a "wolfboy" who is treated like a god. He also enters a medieval court where a jester is entertaining at a banquet. Finally, he encounters the child Harparkrat, the Egyptian god of silence. *Path Symbol: A* talisman of an ox .

You formulate the astral temple of Malkuth and intone the appropriate divine names. Sandalphon emerges from the mist and you exchange the Projection Sign and the Sign of Silence with her. When she asks why you have come to the temple of Malkuth, you

hold up the ox talisman. The archangel escorts you up the Path of Tau to Yesod. You continue up the Path of Samekh to Tiphareth and up the Páth of Heh to Chokmah.

The circular temple of Chokmah appears before you—its continuous gray wall constructed from various stones. The zodiacal wheel is engraved on the ceiling overhead as well as the floor below. Two white candles are placed on the central altar of star ruby, along with a turquoise bowl containing the temple flame.

You vibrate the divine names of the Sephirah: *Yah, Raziel,* and *Ophanim*. The dark form of the archangel Raziel slowly materializes just east of the altar. His robes are colored a neutral gray, and his face is completely concealed by a gray hood. Two great, gray iridescent wings adorn this shoulders. Raziel questions you:

"You have entered the realm of wisdom and the divine will. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer, holding up the talisman: "By the symbol of the ox."

Raziel gives an almost imperceptible nod. He takes you to the east of the temple where there is a gray curtain. He draws back a portion of the drapery to reveal a yellow archway bearing the white letter Aleph on its keystone. Within the arch is a veil with the tarot image of *The Fool* painted on it. The archangel traces the symbol of elemental air A before the archway, and the veil evaporates. In its place is a door carved out of chalcedony. Holding up the ox talisman, you trace the figure of the letter Aleph ttt before the door, which dissolves. Stepping through the portal, you enter the Eleventh Path. As you do so, you hear the voice of Raziel as he speaks to you:

"The Hebrew Tabernacle in the Wilderness was a most holy sanctuary. Having made an offering at the Altar of Burnt Sacrifice, and having been cleansed at the Laver of Brass, the priest then entered the Holy Place. It is written, 'Such a fire existeth, extending through the rushings of air, or even a fire formless, whence cometh the image of voice. Or even a flashing light rebounding, revolving, whirling forth, crying aloud! O Aether! Son and spirit! The melody of the Aether and of the wide air!'"[33]

You find yourself in a high mountain valley surrounded by snowy peaks. Although the valley is green with the trappings of springtime, the air is very chilly. In the east of the valley is a group

of primitive shelters. Drawing closer, you see what appears to be a prehistoric village. The main shelter of the encampment is a great cave located under a large rock overhang in the side of a cliff. But there are also simple lodges made from the enormous bones of mammoths. Covering these structural supports are the woolly hides of mammoths, providing the inhabitants of each lodge with protection from the cold. A large bonfire is in the center of the village.

The people of the village are warmly dressed in animal hides, furs, and leather-stitched coats, pants, and boots. They go about the rugged business of living in this harsh time and climate. The men of the village are getting ready for a hunt—they busy themselves by sharpening the stone tips of their spears. Women and children are engaged in various activities such as curing strips of animal hide to make clothing and shelter. Some are drying fresh herbs for medicine while others grind charcoal into a fine powder for painting sacred images.

Suddenly a figure emerges from one of the lodges—a boy wearing only the skin of a wolf on his head and shoulders. He scampers around the main campfire on all fours, growling and snapping at the air like a wild animal. Two small children who had been playing near the campfire are frightened by his unexpected presence. Crying, they run for the protection of one of the huts.

You can easily see that this boy is different. He reminds you of old stories where you heard about children who were raised by wolves—his actions seem to imitate that of a wolf. He is completely nonverbal, and he has a touch of madness about him. In another time and place, he might have been sent to an institution—a special school or a hospital for the mentally But what you find fascinating is the way this boy is treated by the adults of the village. They seem to venerate him—bowing to him as he scurries by. Even as the boy attacks some of the adults, biting them viscously several times, no one raises a hand to him or even tries to resist. Eventually, the boy falls to the ground in some kind of seizure. When it is over, the boy sits up, completely placid, oblivious to what has just occurred. A large man walks over to him, gently picks him up, and carries him back to the hut.

Another man, carrying a staff, approaches the campfire. He wears the skin of a musk-ox as an outer robe, and on his head is a helmet inade from the horns of a musk-ox. The shaman of the village approaches each person who was bitten by the boy. Examining the wounds, he appears to be divining from the size, shape, and location of each individual's bite mark. It is then that you realize that the villagers believe that anyone bitten by the boy is blessed by the spirits. Some of the warriors seem especially pleased by the pronouncements of the shaman. You imagine that the shaman is telling them that the spirit of the wolf is excited with the upcoming hunt and pleased at the strength of the warriors. The bite of the wolf spirit ensures that the hunt will be successful.

The madness of the boy is interpreted by the villagers as a sign of divinity. He is considered a messenger of the will of the spirits, touched by the gods. The boy's needs are well cared for, and no one is allowed to mistreat him in any way, for he is considered a walker between the worlds of matter and spirit.

The path continues through a mountain pass in the east, so you journey on, leaving the prehistoric village behind. Gradually, the terrain becomes less rugged and you see signs of a different era. You seem to be traversing time as well as distance. The landscape has changed—it is flatter with many more trees. Stone buildings with thatched roofs lile the road on either side. Peasants work the fields while merchants on horseback pass you by. The path leads to a walled, medieval city. You enter the city following an ox-drawn cart pulling a load of produce.

In the east of the city is a magnificent castle. You enter the courtyard and proceed into the Great Hall where a royal banquet is taking place. Noble men and women sit on one side of a long table and are served ample amounts of food and drink by their attendants. A troop of musicians plays a festive tune on lutes, psalteries, and pipes, accompanied by dancers with silks and ribbons. The atmosphere is quite cheerful and peals of laugher occasionally rock the table. In the center of the table sits the king and queen in all their splendid regalia. As rulers, they seem to be well-liked by the whole assembly, and even the servants seem at ease in their presence.

As the minstrels finish playing a song, their talents are applauded. The dancers leave the center of the Hall, making way for the next performer. A ripple of delight moves through the banquet as an eccentric man dressed in the motley coat, eared hood, bells, and coxcomb of a jester takes to the floor. The crowd erupts with laughter as the professional fool takes a grand bow. He then puts on a shabby crown and pretends to be the king himself, mimicking all of the kings mannerisms with extreme exaggeration and haughtiness. The king himself gives a hearty laugh as he recognizes his own behaviorisms being made into a visual joke.

You marvel at this humorous entertainer whose madness and folly, whether real or fictitious, makes him such a source of amusement and pleasure that he is able to ridicule and abuse even the mighty king himself. In his role as court jester, he seems to offer a function that is needed in the social order of the kingdom—he threatens that order with comic derision, and yet he also brings it fresh insights about itself.

Leaving the banquet hall, you take up the path again and continue on toward the east, leaving the medieval city behind. Day turns to night as the sky turns into a blue-violet canopy of stars. The road takes you into a region overlooking a wide, flat river delta dotted with palm trees. You realize that time has shifted once again for you are now in ancient Egypt on a cliff overlooking the river Nile.

Ahead on the path is a great pyramid, its limestone surface gleaming like silver in the star light. You notice that the pyramid is truncated—its apex is flat, not triangular. A tiny figure is perched on the summit of the structure. You here the voice of a young boy within your mind. "Come up," it says.

There is no entrance into the structure, so you are not sure how to get to the top of the pyramid. Once again, you hear the voice: "Come up," it entreats. Just then, the wind starts to increase. A great gust of air picks you up off your feet and carries you aloft, spinning through the atmosphere. At length, the wind gently deposits you on the summit of the pyramid. The breeze diminishes just as quickly as it developed.

Before you, a young boy with golden-brown skin sits cross-legged on a large white lotus blossom beneath the starry sky. He

wears an Egyptian kilt and a headband bearing the symbol of the uraeus or royal cobra. On the right side of his head is a single lock of hair, the symbol of youth. Harpocrates, or Harparkrat, the divine child, looks up at you with large brown eyes full of innocence and mischief. With a boyish chuckle, he waves his hand and the disk of the sun begins to rise in the east. Harparkrat is the god of the earliest rays of the morning sun. He is also the primordial child, the first offspring of creation, containing all the powers of the cosmos within himself. He smiles at you impishly and snaps bis fingers, causing the wind to increase once more. He snaps his fingers again, and the wind is silent. He is a god, older than the most ancient star—and he is a child, younger than a newborn's first breath. The young god has all the power of the universe at his fingertips, and yet he is so young



Figure 51: The Divine Child

that you wonder if he really understands his own strength. He is pure, untrained potential—the first movement of the cosmos into manifestation. He has the ability to create and destroy whole worlds. And he is as hungry fór practical experience as any human child.

You look into his eyes and wonder if you could ever understand such a being. You watch as Harparkrat purses his lips to exhale. As he does so, the process of evolution and manifestation down the Tree of Life commences. In your mind's eye you see the formation of the lower nine Sephiroth out of Kether, following the path of the Flaming Sword. The child inhales and initiates the process of involution, establishing the Navitoth in their natural succession back to the source of all in Kether.

The young god puts his índex finger to his lips in the Sign of Silence. Yet he speaks to you within your own mind: "I am breath, and breath is the evidence of life." He raises the palm of his hand to his mouth and blows his breath across it. As he does so, the wind increases. It picks you up from the top of the pyramid and carries you high up into the sky, whirling like a fylfot cross through the air, and eventually depositing you at the foot of the pyramid.

Your journey on the Path of Aleph is finished. You retum to the temple of Chokmah, where you are greeted by the archangel Raziel. Continuing down the Path of Heh, you descend to the Tiphareth. From there you descend the Path of Samekh to Yesod and continue down the Path of Tau to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon seals the portal behind you. You salute the archangel of Malkuth with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.



Kether

Kether is the first Sephirah and the highest Crown. Of all the spheres on the Tree, Kether is the least dense and material. It is the first emanation out of the limitless and eternal "nothingness," and through Kether all the subsequent spheres carne finto being. Kether is a level of pure divine consciousness symbolized by brilliant white light. Kether is archetypally androgynous, and it is the nearest concept

that we can consider in terms of absolute deity—eternal God. All things in the manifest universe emanate from Kether, and to Kether all things shall return.

The number one, which encloses within itself the remaining vine digits of the decimal scale, was described by Pythagoras as the undividable monad. It cannot be divided, yet it can be defined. By the process of reflection (1 + 1 = 2, 1 + 2 = 3, etc.), the monad defines and generates all the other numbers. Kether is the starting point; it is the moment that the universe as we know it was conceived. Kether is the initial spark or first breath of the divine. This androgynous sphere is placed at the summit of the central pillar on the Tree of Life; at the apex of equilibrium.

The *Sepher Yetzirah,* says of Kether:

> *The First Path is called Admirable or Hidden Intelligence (the Highest Crown), for it is the light-giving power of comprehension of that first principie which has no beginning; and it is the Primal Glory, for no created being can attain to its essence.*

The words "Hidden Intelligence" imply a hint of the unmanifest nature of Kether. The purest seeds of life (the divine spark) are found only at the level of the first emanation, where they have always been—removed from the concept of having a "beginning point." The divine Life-essence, as it descends the Tree of Life, is merely undergoing a process of transformation, from one form of energy to another (as explained in the teachings of alchemy). The *Sepher Yetzirah* also indicates that no created being can hope to attain the pure spiritual light and essence of Kether; that would be akin to an adult human being returning to the womb to become a fertilized egg. No being using a physical organism as its vehicle of consciousness can attain the essence of Kether. However, if consciousness has been purified to the point where it transcends thought, it receives from the "Primal Glory" the power of comprehension of the first principle.

A GUIDED VISUALIZATION INTO KETHER

Summary: The student journeys from Malkuth to Yesod and Tiphareth. From there he travels the Thirteenth Path of Gimel to the temple of Kether. He meets the archangel Metatron and the angelic choir known as the Chayoth ha-Qadesh. He finds himself in the company of all the deities, angels, and other guides that he has encountered on his exploration of the Tree of Life. *Kether Symbol:* A circular talisman with the image of the point **O.**

Entering the temple of Malkuth, you give the appropriate signs, and the archangel Sandalphon takes you up the Path of Tau to Yesod. From there you ascend the Path of Samekh to Tiphareth. Then you rise up the Path of Gimel.

You find yourself standing at the end of the Thirteenth Path, facing the door to the astral temple of Kether. A large white door is before you. Carved into this door is the Hebrew letter Kaph painted in white. Giving the Projection Sign, you step through the door into the first Sephirah. Once inside, you give the Sign of Silence.

The temple of Kether is so brilliant that you cannot see the walls, the ceiling, or the floor of the sanctuary. The air is scented with ambergris, and the only thing you can see is the central altar made of pure diamond. The only thing on the altar is a bowl containing the temple flame. The temple is permeated with the most perfect sense of calm and serenity that you have ever known.

You vibrate the divine name which awakens the inhabitants of Kether, *Eheieh,* and the name of the archangel *Metatron.* Then you call on the order of angels known as the *Chayoth ha-Qadesh.*

A gleaming white form slowly materializes just east of the altar, behind a sheer veil. You can barely make out the figure of a man dressed in robes of the purest white, without shadows. Great white eagle wings spring from his shoulders—the feathers shimmering faintly with all the muted colors of the rainbow. This is Metatron, the greatest of the archangels, who is known by the titles of the Lesser YHVH, Ioel, and Saphra, the great scribe. Metatron speaks to you in a commanding and powerful voice:

"You have entered the realm of the Hidden Intelligence and the Highest Crown. By what symbol doest thou enter herein?"

You answer, holding up the talisman: "By the symbol of the point."

Metatron responds: "The point signifies unity, the origin, and the center. It is a worthy symbol for the sphere of Kether."

Metatron directs your attention to the temple flame on the altar. The fire fiares suddenly and the room around you completely fades from view. It is replaced by absolute, total darkness. You hear the voice of the archangel addressing you:

"The voice of my Undying and Secret Soul said unto me, 'Let me enter the Path of Darkness and, peradventure, there 1 shall find the Light. I am the only being in an Abyss of Darkness. From an Abyss of Darkness came I forth ere my birth, from the silence of a Primal Sleep.' And the Voice of Ages answered to my soul—'I am he who formulates in darkness—the Light that shineth in darkness yet the darkness comprehendeth it not.'"[34]

You see a single, distant pinpoint of light in the all-consuming darkness. The point of light grows larger and larger until it fills your entire field of vision. The total blackness is replaced by absolute brilliant whiteness. It is then that you see them—the four Holy Living Creatures—the same four angelic beings that you envisioned on the Eighteenth Path of Cheth with the prophet Ezekiel. The angelic host of Kether correspond to and resemble the four Kerubim of Yesod. They have human bodies, and each has four faces—that of a lion, an eagle, a man, and a bull. But this time their appearance is slightly different: each creature has six wings—one pair that covers each creature's body, one pair that stretches upward to frame the angel's heads, and one pair that stands straight out from the creature's shoulders. They stand wingtip to wingtip in a spectacular formation. This time there is no sound of thunderous wings, and the creatures are not accompanied by flashes of fire or lightning. Instead, they are barely visible—the details of their features are palely outlined against the extreme effulgence.

The four beings speak together with one melodious voice that you recognize as the voice of *Metatron* Ketherial—Metatron as the leader of the angelic host of the first Sephirah. His voice and their voices are one. The unified voice of the angels speak to you:

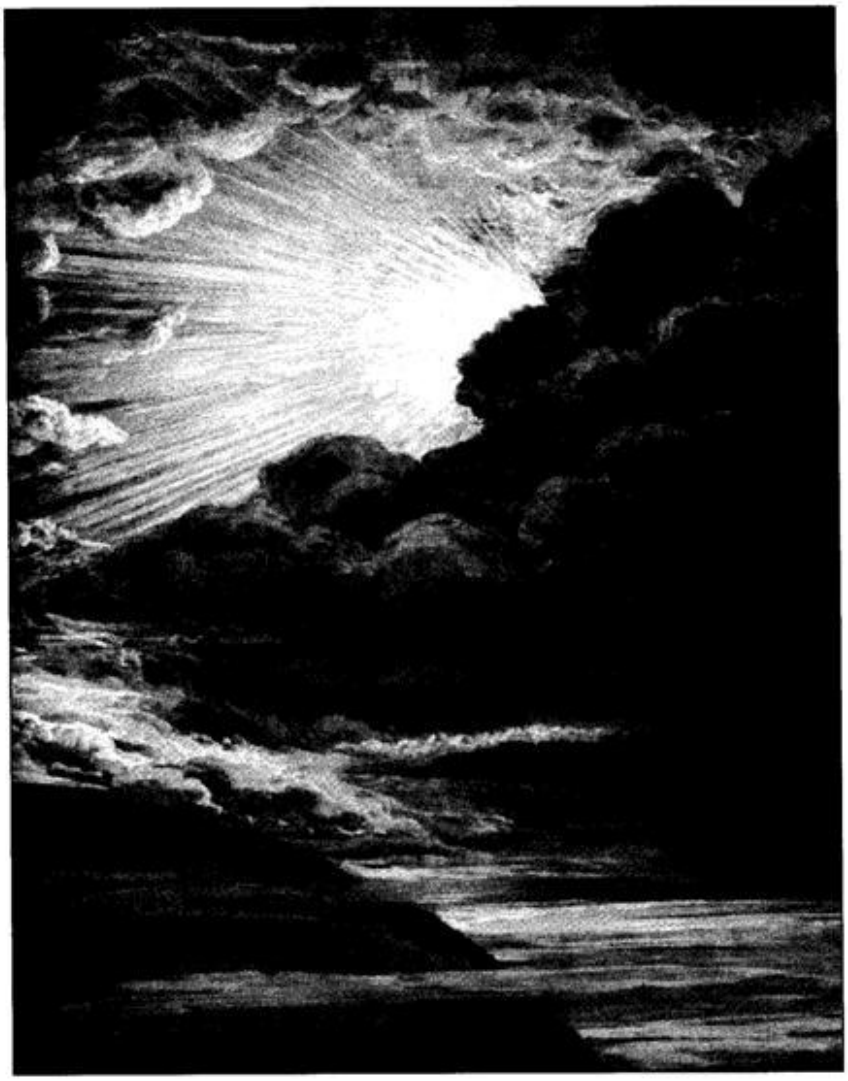


Figure 52: The Light Divine

"We are the Chayoth ha-Qadesh, the Holy Living Creatures. We are the elemental kings set over the Angelic Tablets of Enoch, who live in pure holiness. We represent the union of pure consciousness and pure being. It is our function to set primary patterns of existence, for we are among the first ones. We are instantaneous and we are one—the reintegraters of wholeness. It is written: 'There is no part of me that is not of the gods.'

"We are the means by which the divine essence manifests itself in the course of creation, and withdraws itself into the unmanifest—recombining the diverse forms of life based on our pattern, back into the primal unity on the return course of redemption.

"It is also our duty to provide the focus of singularity to the work of the initiate. For the Monad is the beginning of all things and contains all things, all numbers within itself. We keep the initiate in correct alignment with the One Unity—the All, and thus revitalized with an influx of light and life. In this task, the equilibrating angels known as the Kerubim act as our vice-gerents to the initiate in the outer world.

"Who can conceive of the ineffable light that dwells in Kether? That highest of spheres that has been called the Existence of Existences, the Concealed of the Concealed, the Ancient of Ancients, the Ancient of Days, the Most High, and the Head which is not?

"It is written: 'The voice of my Higher Self said unto me: Let me enter the Path of Light, and peradventure, I may be prepared to dwell there. 1 am the only being in this glory of the Ineffable. From the divine brilliance came I forth ere my birth, from the splendor of the Infinite Light.'"

The vision of the Chayoth ha-Qadesh fades into the whiteness of the background. In its place you see a mass of angelic beings-thousands on thousands of spiritual entities slowly spiraling inward toward a single brilliant point of light. You see the angelic hosts of all the Sephiroth, the Ashim, Kerubim, Melekim, and so forth, all proceeding to the center point of the universe. All the gods and goddesses, kings, guides, and prophets that you encountered on the Tree of Life are here as well: the goddess Ishtar from the Thirty-second Path of Tau, Yeheshuah from the Twenty-fifth Path of Samekh, Perceval, the Quest Knight, from the Twenty-first Path of

Kaph. Nephthys, Moshe, Aphrodite, Osiris, Ezekiel, and all of the other divine, angelic, and heroic figures from your pathworking journeys are here. They are all a part of this holy procession. Never before have you envisioned such a grand conclave of spiritual beings.

The divine pageant continues its slow, graceful dance to the center of the light of Kether, as you hear the combined voices of the Chayoth Ha-Qadesh singing as one:

"Holy! Holy! Holy! One is His beginning, One is His individuality, His permutation is One. ARARITA! ARARITA! ARARITA! One thought! One body! One mirad! One soul! One spirit! One Self! One is His beginning, One is His individuality, His permutation is One."

You realize that you have become a part of the procession. You have joined hands with the others in the spiraling light. You have joined in the sacred dance on the Way of Return. The surrounding light grows brighter and brighter until you can no longer see or feel any separation between yourself and the other beings. Their knowledge is your knowledge. Their experiences are your experiences. All you see is the brilliant light. All you feel is a complete sense of wholeness, grace, and an awareness that after a long and arduous journey, you are finally home. You spend an indefinable amount of time basking in the glow of this heavenly companionship.

The vision of the divine light fades, for your excursion into the sphere of Kether is at an end. Following the Path of Gimel, you return to the temple of Tiphareth, and from there you descend the Path of Samekh to Yesod. You continue down the Path of Tau to the temple of Malkuth. Sandalphon closes the portal behind you. You salute the archangel of Malkuth with the Projection Sign. She answers with the Sign of Silence.

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Your journey into the Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom has concluded for now. May what you have experienced maintain you in your search for the Quintessence, the Stone of the Philosophers. True Wisdom, Perfect Happiness, the Summum Bonum.

Endnotes

1. From A. E. Waite's "The Adeptus Major Ceremony." (Regardie, *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic,* Vol. Seven, 146.)
2. See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 74, 212.
3. Adapted from the Appendix of Hartmanri *s Magic, White and Black,* 297.
4. A triple enclosure consists of three concentric squares that are bisected with an equal-armed cross.
5. Ode 25:8, from the "Odes of Solomon," *The Forgotten Books of Eden,* 133.
6. In *Pardes Rimonim,* Rabbi Cordovero described a method for pronouncing the permutations of YHVH combined with the letter Aleph and the five primary vowel sounds. This method is said by some to have originated from the system of Abulafia.
7. Adapted from Ode 38:1-8, from the "Odes of Solomon," *The Forgotten Books of Eden,* 137.
8. Adapted from Ode 26:8-12, from the "Odes of Solomon," *The Forgotten Books of Eden,* 137.
9. A pointed oval shape used in religious art of the Middle Ages as an aureole to surround a sacred figure.
10. See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 416.
11. Ibid., 196, 177.
12. Adapted from one of the Coffin Texts.
13. Ibid.
14. The seat reserved for the knight destined to find the Holy Grail and fatal for any other occupant.
15. Shakespeare, *King Henry VI,* pt. 2, act 3, sc. 2.
16. Adapted from the Appendix of Hartmann's *Magic, White and Black,* 298.
17. This section has been adapted from "The Secrets of Enoch," *(The Forgotten Books of Eden)* a pseudepigraphal work, the only existing version of which is a Slavonic translation of the Greek original. The Slavonic edition is a Christian work, probably of the seventh century C.E., but is taken from an older Jewish work written sometime in the first century C.E.
18. Adapted from a brief section of "The Testimony of Truth." (Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library,* 406-407.)
19. A symbol of a stylized three-petaled flower. A symbol of royalty and spiritual illumination. Also a symbol of fertility associated with the goddess.
20. The Song of Solomon, 2:1-2.
21. From the *Phaenomena* of Aratus, a third century B.C.E. poet who described forty-three constellations and named five individual stars. (Olcott,126.)
22. Adapted from I Corinthians, 13.

23. A staff or wand carried by the Greek god Dionysus, tipped with a pine cone and twined with ivy. A phallic symbol of fertility.
24. Stanley, *The Chaldaean Oracles, 5.*
25. Adapted from the "Trimorphic Protennoia." (Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library,* 461-462.)
26. Adapted from the sixty-fourth chapter of *The Book of the Dead* as given by Farr in *Egyptian Magic,* 13-14.
27. Genesis, 1:1-2.
28. Psalms, 127:1.
29. Adapted from Longfellow's *Hernies Trismegistus.*
30. Adapted from "The Secret Song." (Randolph, *Divine Pymander, 75.)*
31. From the "Bornless Ritual" of the Golden Dawn. (Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 442.)
32. Saint John, 1:1-2.
33. Adápted from Regardie 's "Ritual of the Watchtowers," and from Stanley's *The Chaldaean Oracles,* 16.
34. See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn,* 124.